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THE  
SPORTSMAN IN FRANCE.

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CHAPTER I.

Preparations for a *grande chasse*—Breakfast at the Chateau—Excellent sport—Melancholy accident to one of the attendants—Two dogs killed—Dinner at the Chateau—*Dejeuner à la fourchette en ville*—Mr. Boulter's pupil—Pot-luck, and *la fortune du pot*.

WE were now, one and all, French and English, looking forward with no little anxiety to the day when we should attack the boars in right earnest ; and as soon as Belcher recovered from the effects of his recent onslaught, we began to make our preparations.

Such excitement in the good, quiet, dull town of *Rennes* had not been witnessed for years—certainly not since the Chouans, who, in the plenitude of their Bourbonism and loyalty, had pinned with their pitchforks a few of the unoffending inhabitants against their tenements, besides indulging in a little wholesale phlebotomy, by severing a few jugulars with their sickles.

Nothing had been talked of for some days previously but our crusade against the boars, and “*Guerre aux Sangliers!*” was the cry far and near. The meet was appointed to take place at the Chateau in the vicinity of the Forest, where we had been so hospitably entertained on the former occasion, when we had given our disjointed pack a preliminary run.

Numberless were the snoring couples disturbed on this eventful morning. By dawn of day, the hired beaters were at

the gateway of our hotel, as well as the *piqueurs*, the *gardes de chasse*, and attendants. Some volunteers, too, were particularly active in proclaiming our intentions, for there was scarcely a street in the town which did not re-echo the inharmonious blasts from the *cors de chasse*, with which these emulous gentlemen had provided themselves. Whether it was the discord, or the unusual interruption at so early an hour, or the association of ideas as connected with the *horns*, I will not pretend to say, but certain it is that more than one somniferous husband wished us quietly immured within the dungeons of *Mont St. Michel*. This malediction was subsequently communicated to us in private, by their better halves.—But, to resume :—

By six o'clock the whole party of chas-seurs had assembled in front of our hotel, and I started our huntsman, Collins, with

the dogs. Our landlord made his appearance *en bonnet de nuit*, with a magnum of superlative Cognac under his arm, that we might drink success to the expedition: some diminutive glasses were handed round to the assembled party, but prior to the contents being swallowed, three cheers were given, which were followed by a concert of horn music that had well nigh shattered my *tympanum*.

These deafening sounds having been cut short at my earnest entreaty, the *goutte* was quaffed with appropriate honours, and some of the more resolute of the followers took a double dose, to fortify themselves for the approaching encounter.

A Frenchman never commences his day's work without his *goutte*, or morning drop. We Englishmen call it an "anti-fogmatic." The Yankee designates it as a "phlegm-cutter." I have not time now to discuss the relative merits or appropriate-

ness of the terms, nor will I quarrel with them—suffice it to say, that I gulped down my quantum as well as the rest, and having marshalled all ranks in due order, we set forth in right good humour for *Le bout de Lande*.

The French gentlemen of the original club amounted to twelve in number ; these, with Captain G—— (the founder), and our three noble selves, made sixteen guns—rather more than I either desired or approved of. I had made it a *sine quâ non*, that they should put themselves under my orders ;—it was agreed to unanimously, and I am bound to say they were implicitly obeyed. I was most ably and willingly assisted by our guide, who had been a garde de chasse, and who thoroughly entered into my views—he understood his duty, and performed it well ; added to which, his knowledge of every

nook and corner of the forest gave him a decided superiority over his compeers.

The members of this *ci-devant* Anglo Gallican hunt were very tolerably mounted, and, owing to the kindness of our new acquaintances, so were we likewise. It had been arranged that we were to leave our horses at our friend's chateau, and proceed to the forest on foot ; and as we cavaliers deemed it expedient to lay a good foundation, in the shape of a substantial breakfast, prior to commencing operations, we made the best of our way to the mansion, with the laudable intention of making play at the edibles, while the pedestrians were pulling foot to join us.

The ride had not tended to diminish our appetites, and we attacked, with becoming zeal, the different *patés* and cold game provided for us. It was nearly ten o'clock before the whole party were in



readiness, and even then some further time elapsed in making each *aspirant* clearly understand the instructions by which he was to abide. The guide had so clearly described the several intersections of the *grande allée*, and the numerous paths bisecting the wood, that no mistake occurred.

I had pre-determined that my fellow-countrymen should occupy the stations on my right and left, as I calculated there would be less chance of my receiving a bullet by mistake, than if any of the eager, rash, and excitable Frenchmen were in my immediate neighbourhood. Your mercurial Gaul has not the slightest command over himself for the moment, and he can no more help firing at a bird, hare, or rabbit, even if his bosom friend be in a direct line with it, than he can help dancing when he hears a fiddle.

Frenchmen are delightful companions

in a ball-room ; but in the field they are infinitely more agreeable—out of shot. I speak *feelingly*, having at this moment some dozen or two of No. 6 in my dexter calf, having received the charge instead of a hare at which a certain French baron fired as the animal crossed between us.

On arriving at the wood's side, each *chasseur* was directed to his station, with a *piqueur* or a *garde de chasse*, to accompany him : our host's keeper was allotted to me, and a very efficient ally I found him. Blucher, Boatswain, and Belcher, were handed over to Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself ;—the latter was quite recovered, and he looked as if he meant mischief, as he followed to the scene of his late disaster.

Our huntsman, Collins, took Boxer to himself, as before, and departed with our pack and the guide, to the western boundary of the forest, in order that the game

might be driven down to us. I had selected for my own stand the same spot I had before occupied ; it offered many advantages—amongst others, that of the centre of the line, if I may so express myself, for my companions in arms were pretty equally divided on my right and left ; and, as I thought it possible some of those to the right might miss a shot or two, the chances were in my favour as to a stray boar or chevreuil passing my way from the westward, where the dogs were to be laid on.

Nearly two hours elapsed before the fun commenced ; but when it did begin, we were no longer idle. Before the pack had given us their welcome music, I had reconnoitred my position, and visited my countrymen, who were stationed about three hundred yards from me each way. I knew our rifles to be good, and was also convinced that there were cool heads

and stout hearts to back them ; so I felt secure as to my neighbours.

Captain G——, from *Rennes*, had also a good rifle ; but he had followed the dogs, being more anxious to see them work than to wait for a chance shot. The guide had sent an intelligent *piqueur* to every stand to ascertain that each post was guarded ; when assured of this, he set to work in good earnest.

I shall not easily forget the sensation I experienced when I heard our gallant little pack in full cry—the pace, I was told, was terrific ; and the result in some degree bore out the assertion, for they neared us very perceptibly indeed.

What was that ?—A shot !—another, and another ! A dark object was presently discernible coming down the *grande allée* ; but he galloped not straight—he reeled ;—in a few seconds he was within a few paces of me ; a deep and purple

stream was gushing from his side, but still he fled from his unrelenting pursuers as fast as his remaining strength would allow him. As he passed me, I sent so sharp a messenger after him, that he was fain compelled to obey the summons. A death-like sound of agony escaped him—he staggered, fell, and died on the spot. He was a fine plump boar, about three parts grown; and certainly so fat a gentleman at large I never saw.

My garde de chasse, whose shoulders were ornamented with a huge hunting-horn, now sounded the death; and before his lungs had completed half the mournful dirge, the pack were with us, the guide and Collins following soon afterwards; and we were presently joined by three or four more of the party.

A French gentleman claimed the honour of having first hit the boar; to which distinction I believe he was justly entitled;

but Captain P——, on my right hand, had perforated his hide also, for there were two wounds besides the *quietus* I had given him. Our friend Belcher took a very satisfactory sniff at the fallen swine, which was deposited at the foot of a tree close to my garde de chasse.

“Tryback!” was now the word. Collins and the guide retraced their steps, while the dogs were casting wistful glances from under their ears at the dainty morsels they were leaving behind ; but they returned to their duty very obediently, and were soon lost in the brushwood.

In somewhat less than an hour the dogs gave us to understand that it was time to be on the *qui vive* ; they had found, but to my disappointment the cheering sounds grew fainter and fainter, a proof that the game was not making for our immediate neighbourhood. A shot was presently heard ; and imme-

diately afterwards the death-note of our guide's bugle announced that some havoc had been committed.

The old garde de chasse and myself remained where we were ; and we afterwards learnt that Captain G—— had been the successful *tireur* on the occasion : although not planted on any particular beat, he had obtained a fair shot at a boarling, and sent him to his long home in a very sportsmanlike manner.

The dogs were soon at work again and making in our direction. On looking westward to my right, up the *grande allée*, I perceived something like a cloud of dust, rather an unusual sight in the forest, but which eventually proved to be sand, and which was kicked and scattered about in all directions by some seven or eight infantine boars, who came frisking towards me, apparently enjoying their gallop.

My friend Captain P——, I knew,

would not allow so good an opportunity to escape him, and the sharp and stinging report of his rifle soon confirmed the opinion. As a reward for his coolness and skill, one of the young squadron remained behind ; the rest, little heeding their fallen comrade, came cantering down to us at a tolerably smart pace ; and when they were opposite to our stand, the *garde de chasse* and myself let fly at them : the result was, one killed and one wounded ; the latter endeavoured to hobble after his scared brethren, but was *hors de combat*. I sent my friend Belcher to him, and a famous tussle they had ; but it did not last long, although the dog had all but choked him, when the *garde de chasse* finished the business by severing his windpipe.

This prudent aid-de-camp of mine begged of me to load as soon as possible, and to look out for the *père* or *la mère*, as he



was convinced the “sounder” could not be far off. Dragging, therefore, our diminutive prize after us, we made all due preparation for the reception of the old hogs.

We were screwing our courage to the sticking place, when a shot on our right from Captain P—— caused our pulses to beat in double quick time. We were not long kept in suspense, for the lady mother soon made her appearance, and in no very gentle mood either. Captain P—— had hit her in that ignoble part of her person, which, when she looked towards the east, faced the west; this argument *à posteriori* had not put her in the best of humours, and her wrath had in all probability been excited by the desertion of her young fry.

I had not much time left me for philosophizing, as the sow, having stolen a

glance at us, seemed disposed to wreak her vengeance on our sweet persons.

As this was a consummation by no means desirable, I deemed it prudent to give her notice to quit, so I saluted her with the contents of Mr. Moore's inimitable rifle. I hit her in the chest, of which pleasing fact I was not so well assured ; for as I fired she made a rush at me, which impended mischief ; but just as I was preparing to cede the right of way to her, she staggered, and fell a few yards from me.

Mr. Belcher, as usual, was very anxious to shew fight on the occasion, and viewed with a suspicious eye the advances of the enraged animal, and just before she fell he charged her and sprang at her throat. I was apprehensive that the gallant dog might sustain a second injury, for the old lady's tusks were for-

midable to look at, and, although unable to run, she was good at close quarters against any antagonist.

I ran to my tree for my reserve gun—one of Westley Richards's—which I had lent my friend the Marquis on a former occasion, and flew to the rescue of the pugnacious Belcher. He had placed himself rather awkwardly, at least for my purpose, for, in the position he had taken up, I was fearful of hitting him as well as the old sow. After some little dodging, I seized a favourable opportunity, and shot her through the body.

My garde de chasse then attacked the foe in the rear with a hatchet, and, after several well-directed chops on the pericranium, the savage beast was done for. The garde de chasse then proceeded to persuade Belcher, *à la mode Anglaise*, to let go his hold—I assisted also, and was squeezing his throat with as strong a

gripe as I could command, while the Frenchman was munching his tail.

This interesting occupation so entirely engrossed us, that we heard not the approach of (I presume) the defunct lady boar's liege lord. The nether end of the *garde de chasse* faced the advancing boar, which rushed furiously between his legs, but fortunately without doing him any injury. Lucky was it for him also that he had a capacious stride, and that he was stooping at the moment, otherwise he must have been seriously injured. By this rude shock the *garde* and myself were both upset, and Belcher released from his hold. The unexpected visitor seemed for the moment as disconcerted as ourselves ; for there lay his lady-love, dead, and covered with gore, and in the company of strangers.

I had been told that a boar would run at and gore a person, but would never





THE BECKLETON FIELD DOG TACKLING A WILD BOAR

face about and attack any one after the first rush. I can say that this one was an exception to the rule, for he made a desperate run at Belcher, who sprung at, but missed him.

I had a bullet still left in one of my barrels, but I must confess I was a little off my guard: the suddenness of the attack *in the rear*, so wholly unexpected, and the jeopardy my poor dog was in, unnerved me for the moment. I picked up my gun, however, and as the brute was preparing to give Belcher a taste of his terrific tusks, I lodged a bullet under his shoulder. He “turned about,” and “wheeled about,” and seemed rather astonished, especially when the gallant dog made a spring at his throat; but at the very same instant the boar ducked his head, and Belcher found himself on the animal’s neck and shoulders.

I trembled for the dog, as I feared he

could not get any hold, and how he held on I know not. The boar, by no means satisfied with his reception, made down the *grande allée* towards Mr. W——, the garde de chasse and myself following, as we were both anxious as to the fate of Belcher.

We were soon overtaken by the pack, which were in full cry, and altogether the scene was intensely interesting. I was certain my friend W—— would give the boar his *quietus* if he could obtain a shot without risking the life of the dog ; and to my infinite delight I heard immediately afterwards the report of the rifle, and the chorus of the dogs led me to hope the shot had taken effect.

I do not remember having run, at any period of my life, three hundred yards in so short a space of time. The reader may imagine my gratification on reaching the spot, to find the boar at bay, with



Boatswain at Belcher's side, and the pack surrounding the combatants. Mr. W—— had shot this troublesome customer in the thigh, and smashed the bone.

The two bull dogs tackled the savage swine with the most determined ferocity, and our guide and the piqueur had now an opportunity for the display of their prowess, and, to their credit be it recorded, they acquitted themselves with commendable courage. The guide was the first to advance, spear in hand, and, taking advantage of the boar's undivided attention to his canine assailants, manfully drove his spear under the boar's shoulder.

This application of cold steel was by no means relished, for the already enraged animal became absolutely frantic, and was evidently making himself up for mischief. Gathering together, therefore, all that remained of his strength,

he made a desperate rush on his three available legs at two or three of the piqueurs, who were anxiously looking on at the fun. These functionaries nimbly stepped aside to avoid the collision, but in doing so they jeopardized the limbs of their companions in the rear. Mr. W—— had a very narrow escape, for the boar brushed past him in no very gentle mood, and would have injured him severely, had not his activity saved him from a fearful laceration.

A corpulent rustic was less fortunate ; —the exasperated brute, having missed giving Mr. W—— the benefit of his tusks, caught Jean Marie Grosjean just above his dexter calf, and gored him in a most determined manner, and had it not been for the presence of mind, and promptness of action, on the part of our guide, the misadventure might have turned out of a more serious nature. In

an instant his spear was buried between the boar's shoulders.

My aide-de-camp, who had remained by my side, as quickly lent his assistance, and with his *couteau de chasse* put an end to the contest, by severing the brute's jugular with surgical skill. Our dogs had behaved nobly, never leaving their hold for a moment; and it will be remembered that Belcher had ridden on the neck of his adversary for upwards of two hundred yards. Our pack of hounds now began to manifest considerable impatience for their share of the spoil.

As soon, therefore, as the "*Dogues Anglais*" (as Belcher and his brother bulls were called) could be shaken off—(no easy matter by the way)—the guide expertly disembowelled the animal, and the much-coveted entrails were distributed to the hounds.

This said boar, which had afforded us

so much sport, and defended himself so nobly, was of gigantic stature, and the largest we had ever killed. Our attention was now bestowed upon Jean Marie Grosjean, whose leg had been so frightfully gored. We sacrificed a few pocket-handkerchiefs, which, being torn into strips, served admirably for bandages. While I was binding up the wound, one of the idlers was despatched to the chateau for a pony, to convey the sufferer up to the house, and from thence to Rennes in a cabriolet.

The poor fellow bore the pain with great fortitude, and made more light of the accident than I expected. It was, in truth, an ugly gash, and I was anxious that he should have the benefit of surgical advice with the least possible delay. I determined upon remaining by his side until the pony should arrive to carry him out of the wood ; but as no danger was to be

apprehended, I saw no objection to a renewal of our sport.

The guide, *piqueurs*, and Collins, therefore, departed with the pack in quest of another boar, and the chasseurs repaired to their several stands.

In somewhat less than an hour the hounds had found again, and Mr. W. and myself were gladdened by hearing two or three shots in succession on our extreme right ; and presently a mournful ditty on an old cracked horn gave us to understand that one or more of the party had done some execution. I was anxious for the arrival of the pony, not only for the sake of the disabled rustic, but also that I might return to my own stand, and take my share in the fray.

The lad at length made his appearance, and I saw Jean Marie Grosjean carefully deposited on the palfrey's back, and forwarded to the residence of our host, who

had given orders that a carriage was to convey him to Dr. Godefroi at Rennes the moment the wounded man reached the chateau. As soon as the poor fellow was fairly off I returned with my *garde de chasse* and another attendant to my allotted post, in the hope of having another shot or two before the day closed in.

A long and tedious interval elapsed ere we were saluted with any notes from the horns of the *piqueurs*, to announce that they were about to recommence operations. The extraordinary delay which took place will be accounted for hereafter.

Once more the cheering sounds of the tuneful pack in full cry reached us, and a good look-out did we keep—at least, such was my intention ; but I unfortunately happened to turn round to answer a question put to me by my extra attendant, and missed the opportunity of firing

at a chevreuil which bounded past me at the moment. I was a little ruffled at this, as may be imagined, and consoled myself by d——g the inquisitive fellow, and blaming him *of course* for causing the mishap.

My rage was not of long duration, for before half my ire had found vent, another splendid chevreuil bolted out of the thicket about fifty yards above my stand, and landed in the middle of the *grande allée*. He seemed undetermined at first which way to turn ; but to my immeasurable satisfaction, he decided upon facing to the right. The utmost caution was now necessary, for the slightest movement on my part, or that of my companions, would have marred everything—a whisper even, and our chevreuil was lost for ever.

I hardly ventured to breathe, it was a moment of such intense anxiety. The

beautiful animal stopped once before he reached the narrow path, (at the head of which I was posted,) listening to the fast approaching pack. The *littel deer*, as my French friend at Rennes would have said, was not long inactive—one bound and he was abreast of me, and making down the riding towards Mr. W. I was lucky enough to get a good aim, and having had plenty of time to shake off any symptom bordering on the nervous, it proved to be unerring. I sent a bullet just behind the shoulder, which stopped his career—he gave one spring upwards, and fell dead on the instant—I had shot him through the heart.

The *garde de chasse* ran to the spot with the laudable intention of dragging the noble roebuck to our stand ; but he little dreamt of the interruption which was awaiting him. I have said that the pack was nearing us before I brought



down the chevreuil,—it would appear that they were on the track of another boar, for before I could warn my aide de camp of his danger, two boars were within a few feet of him. I was taken as much by surprise as himself; for in watching his movements I had neither seen nor heard the swine coming down the *allée*. It was too late when I did discover them, for I could not fire from the position in which I stood without the probability of hitting him. I halloo'd at the top of my voice, but my breath was wasted, and my feelings were anything but enviable.

I had scarcely recovered from the effects the first accident had produced, and here was almost a certainty of a second happening. The reader may therefore form some faint idea of the pleasure I experienced when Francois, my *garde de chasse*, had escaped the impending peril.

True to their savage custom, the boars

had made a desperate rush from the rear at Francois' spindle-shanks ; and he may thank his leanness for having got off with only a scratch. He was thrown off his equilibrium, and fell, but in a trice was on his legs again, and scampered back to his old quarters at my side—the fallen chevreuil, however, had his ribs and chest perforated and torn, but this was all : the brutes had vented their spleen upon the carcass, and were making off at the top of their speed.

I had barely time to give them a parting salute, and hit the hindmost in the buttock,—this was subsequently ascertained, for Mr. W—— killed him as he was skulking out of the wood. I sent Belcher after them, but he arrived too late, and was sent back to me by Mr. W——'s attendant, who informed me that “Monsieur l'Anglais” had done the needful.

The hounds by this time had reached my stand, and were running breast high ; checking them was out of the question, so I desired Collins to run on with them at his best pace as far as Mr. W——'s post, where he would find the object of his pursuit, as dead as he could possibly wish him, at the edge of the covert. Captain G——, with two of our French allies, now came up, and from them I learnt that on the occasion of the extraordinary delay I have before alluded to, two of the hounds had been ripped up by a boar wounded by Captain G——.

He had turned the animal over, and the hounds, heedless of the consequences, had advanced within reach of his formidable tusks, and two had paid the penalty of their rashness ; one was already dead, and the other past all hope of recovery. Unfortunately, Collins, with Boxer at his

side, was not with them, or the calamity never would have happened.

This was a serious loss, for our pack was not a very extensive one. Upon hearing this melancholy intelligence, I resolved upon putting an end to the day's chase ; indeed, it was quite time for returning homewards, for we had not above an hour's fair day-light before us. One of the *piqueurs* who had accompanied Captain G—— was desired to sound, not exactly a retreat, but some intelligible discord, which would bring our friends around us.

This was accordingly executed. I knew that Collins, the guide, and the pack must wend their way towards us, so we had not much difficulty in collecting the chas-seurs. A lad was sent off to a farmhouse not very far from the entrance to the forest for a cart to convey home the game.

The fine chevreuil I had killed was admired by every one, and appeared to be much coveted by all the French gentlemen. On the arrival of Collins with the hounds, the guide, Captain P——, Mr. W——, and the other chasseurs comprising our party, we set off on our return to the chateau, the hospitable owner of which, although requested not to do so, had provided a sumptuous repast for us.

I had directed a *piqueur*, and another attendant upon whom I could place the strictest reliance, to remain in the *grande allée* opposite my own stand to await the arrival of the cart in which the boars, the chevreuil, and the dead and wounded dogs were to be conveyed. The latter I ordered to be destroyed as soon as it reached the chateau, as it was past all cure, and it would have been a cruelty to have prolonged its suffering.

On the whole, I was out of spirits at the conclusion of this first *grande chasse*, although I had no reason to complain of lack of sport; but one poor fellow had been seriously injured, and two good hounds killed. I had been very much excited altogether, and was but ill disposed to join the boisterous party who were preparing, in high glee, to do homage to the savoury fare which I caught a glimpse of on its way from the kitchen to the *salle à manger*.

As it was growing late, I obtained permission from our host for our pack and the master of the hounds to remain on his premises for the night. This plan appeared to be very palatable to Collins, who was profuse in the expression of his gratitude for my attention to his own comfort, as well as that of the dogs. They were accordingly well bedded down in a capacious out-building, and well fed.

Messrs. Belcher, Boxer, Blucher, and Boatswain occupied an adjoining tenement.

Having superintended the arrangements for the quadrupeds, I repaired to the dining-room ; and, previously to attacking a *potage au vermicelle*, I imbibed a glass of old cognac, which worked a miracle. The labours and *désagréments* of the day were forgotten, and by the time I had discussed some two or three *cotelettes*, and was contemplating an attack upon a roasted capon, I was as merry as the jolly companions around me.

As good or ill luck would have it, the rain descended in torrents, and it was agreed, *nem. con.*, that we should pass the night with our host, who seconded the proposition with hearty good will, and prepared us beds, sofas, *lits de sangle*, and shake-downs. As may be anticipated, we made a roaring night of it, and committed

no little havoc with the cellar. I never saw so many empty bottles after a drinking bout in my life ;—but I must not tell tales. Thanks to a strong head, I found my way to my own bed, and awoke betimes without any unpleasant symptoms.

Before any of the guests were stirring, I sent a boy off on a pony to mine host of the *Grande Maison* at Rennes with a note, desiring him to prepare a *recherche' dejeuner à la fourchette* for twenty-five, which he was to have ready by one o'clock.

The visitors made their appearance by ones, twos, and threes, and by nine o'clock all were assembled. The invitation to breakfast *en ville* was proffered by Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself, and accepted with the same frankness and cordiality as it was given.

Like prudent *gastronomes*, therefore, we



partook only of some potent *café noir*, and eschewed the solids until we should arrive at the renowned hotel, where we knew nothing would be wanting to gratify the most fastidious palate.

The *chef* of *La Grande Maison* in the good town of Rennes is an artiste of infinite merit—a *Vatel* in his way. His genius is inventive, and his knowledge profound. His whole soul is wrapt up in his vocation; and his only source of regret is, that his talent should be employed in Brittany, where the major part of the community are not blessed with sufficient discriminatory power to distinguish between a *salmi* and a *civet*.

I had the privilege—the distinguished honour, I ought to say—of being admitted to more than one private audience with this talented individual. To me did he communicate his secret sorrows, and to me also did he impart some of his

culinary lore. Thanks to his friendly confidence, I am in possession of a few secrets touching the compounding of some matchless dainties which, peradventure, I may hereafter make known to the world; but this I must say, that *Pierre Mailhot* is unquestionably the best *hotel cook* (for I include not private *artistes*) I ever met in France.

Collins and the dogs had started soon after daylight for Rennes, and under his care I had also placed the fruits of our *chasse*, with the exception of one boar, which, by unanimous consent, was left at the chateau, and at the disposal of our hospitable host. The chevreuril I had pre-determined on sending to *Monsieur le Préfet*—a compliment due to his public character and official rank, as well as to his private worth.

By ten o'clock we were in our saddles, and starting for *Rennes*, all in high

spirits, and on the most sociable and friendly terms ; and in somewhat less than two hours we had reached our several domiciles, with an hour to spare for bathing and dressing prior to the *dejeuner de garçon*. Five minutes were devoted to my friend the *chef*, exhorting him to call forth his *talent distingué* in serving this repast, and to spare neither trouble nor expense in rendering it worthy of the occasion.

Most energetically did he promise to *faire son possible* : and that was no trifle. Most faithfully and religiously did he keep his word ! I still entertain a tender reminiscence of this unsurpassable, I had almost said unapproachable, *dejeuner*. The endless variety and matchless excellence of his *croquets*, *salmis*, *civets*, *macedoines*, *marengos*, and *bechamels*, are to this day fresh in my memory. I hold

in grateful remembrance his talented efforts to please our friends—he succeeded beyond my hopes. The donors of the feast and the guests were equally delighted at the proofs of his skill ; and to his zealous endeavours was I indebted for one of the pleasantest parties I ever presided at.

I should have mentioned, that on my way to the hotel, in riding up the town, I met Mr. Samuel Boulter's pupil, the portly French gentleman, who so eagerly displayed his smattering of English. I asked him to join our party at breakfast, prefacing the invitation by an apology for its brevity, and accounting for it, as was really the case, by stating that it had only been thought of that morning. He came, and did all in his power to contribute his quota of amusement.

I cannot resist recording another in-

stance of his imperfect knowledge of our language. It happened that Captain G——'s English housekeeper, one Mrs. Hopkins, had an incomparable recipe for corning beef, given to her master, I believe, by the late Admiral Pocock.

As a treat to us Englishmen, some few days after the said breakfast, an enormous brisket, most happily cured, was sent to our hotel by Captain G——.

It was boiled under our own superintendence; and just as we were about to sit down to this truly John Bull fare, who should make his appearance but our *littel Deer* himself. A hearty salutation from Captain P—— was the result, and as he knew but little French, said, in most intelligible English, "Sit down, old fellow, you are just in time to take *pot-luck* with us." He did so; and I never saw any man of any nation enjoy a dish

more than did the English-learning Frenchman our salted brisket ;—he went away delighted.

On a future occasion he was asked to dinner, a regular *diner de cérémonie*, which we gave the *Préfet*, and several of the authorities, in return for their hospitality and kindness to us. A day or two before the dinner took place, on meeting my friend, he said to me, “ Ah, my good gentelman, I ask one favour from you.” “ What is it ? ” I replied. “ You will give me some pot-luck to-morrow, eh ? ” I said I hoped to give him something better than pot-luck. “ No, no, my friend,” he rejoined, “ give me pot-luck, it is so vary good. *Mon Dieu ! c’est délicieux ce pot-luck*. How you do to make so nice your pot-luck, eh ? It is fine dish.”

I must confess I was for some time

at a loss to understand the worthy man, but discovered at length that he had been labouring under a very pardonable error. He thought the corned beef was a dish *named* pot-luck! and not a phrase to convey the meaning of homely fare. This was subsequently confirmed by several families, who told us that the old gentleman had been loud in his praises of a *plat de bœuf salé*, that we called *pot-luck*!

This is only one of several ludicrous mistakes he made. Speaking of pot-luck reminds me of a curious, and certainly an equivocal invitation I once received from a French nobleman, during a visit I paid to the French capital some years ago.

My family had the pleasure of being acquainted with the Vicomte de Chambre, during his residence in this country, and whenever I visited Paris, his house

was open to me. One morning I received the following note from him.—

“ Jeudi, ce 17 Avril, 18—.

“ Mon digne Ami,

Passez chez moi à cinq heures ; vous trouverez la fortune du pot

(And he signed himself)

“ De Chambre.”

Now this it will be admitted was rather startling. I went, however, at all hazards, and found the contents of his “ pot ” decidedly more tempting than might have been anticipated, by a cursory glance at his note.



## CHAPTER II.

*A Chasse en plaine a la mode Anglaise* — Preliminary arrangements — Selection of horses — Trial of the riders — Drilling the hunters — Our host of the chateau is left in a ditch — Grand meet — Disastrous consequences to some of the emulative horsemen — Safe return to the chateau — Dinner by subscription — Ball at Rennes.

*Vive la chasse* was the prevailing toast in the good town of *Rennes* at all convivial meetings — even the apple-munching urchins, as we sauntered about the town, greeted us with *Vive la chasse* whenever they saw us.

For some days we had contemplated giving the inhabitants a boar hunt over the plains, in humble imitation of an

English fox-chase. The only difficulty in the way was, the proverbial obstinacy of the prey we sought ; for if the boars should be disinclined to take a scamper, we knew full well that our powers of persuasion, and those of the pack to boot, were unequal to the task of making them go the way we might wish ; but as our right-hand man Collins was anxious for the experiment *à la mode de Tours*, and having sapiently remarked, “ there’s nothing like trying,” Capt. P——, Mr. W——, and myself sallied forth one fine morning on three borrowed steeds, to pay a visit to our friend at his chateau near *Le Bout de Lande*, the scene of our former exploits ; and having enlisted our host as a guide, we purposed reconnoitring the further extremities of the wood, and to skirt it round in order that our topographical knowledge might be turned to good account when occasion required.

We had heard of a plain on the eastern side of the wood, and to this spot we first directed our steps. We found the plain certainly, but it was not of sufficient extent to answer our purpose; indeed, it was hardly a mile in extent, and, moreover, an extensive forest lay at the further end of it, towards *La Guerche*, for which, as a matter of course, the boar would make.

A youthful volunteer who had accompanied the cavalcade informed us that on the south side, towards the Roudun road, the country was quite open and interspersed with *communes* and pasture land. Our host having confirmed the assertion, we took a circuitous canter of six miles at least, and at last reached the spot, and a better line of country for a steeple-chase or our projected amusement I never wish to look upon.

Thus far matters looked well; and as

the side of the wood fronting this flat country was the spot from which the boars had been driven down to us in a contrary direction, I was induced to hope that we might persuade the swine to go southward instead of eastward at our next visit.

Having satisfied ourselves as to the *locale*, we returned with our hospitable friend to his comfortable mansion, and per force he made us remain and attack the contents of his larder. We had *la fortune du pot*, which was excellent—soup, *bouilli*, *cotelettes*, stewed eels, and a splendid roasted capon, to which were super-added a delicious salad and some savoury cheese ; the wines, too, were superlatively good,—in short, we were so comfortable, that with very little pressing on the part of our host, we consented to take up our quarters for the night under his roof; and a very pleasant evening we passed.

We returned to Rennes on the following morning, and communicated to our friends *en ville* the result of our equestrian tour, and they were not a little pleased at the prospect we held out to them of complying with their wishes by getting up a *chasse en plaine à la mode Anglaise*.

To say the truth, I had some misgivings on the subject, for I had no great faith in our steeds, and I felt assured that if we came to timber-jumping we should lose both boars and dogs, for none of the horses we had as yet seen were equal to the task. I had heard of some that were spoken of very highly, and their owners, who were amongst the most wealthy of the inhabitants, had, unknown to us, pre-determined to mount us. They announced their kind intentions themselves, by waiting on us, and placing their stables at our disposal.

One entire day was devoted to the inspection of the cavalry in and about Rennes, and I was most agreeably surprised at the result, for I must confess we found some ten or a dozen cocktails of a very superior stamp, and, as far as a cursory view of them would enable us to judge, very well calculated to go across country.

These chosen few possessed all the outward and visible signs of good goers, with a tolerable dash of blood and of unexceptionable shape and action. They were all from Paris, and had evidently been selected by an experienced judge of horse-flesh.

As I always act up to the adage "Look before you leap," I suggested the expediency of trying the nags at a fence or two before the "coming day," and accordingly Capt. P —, Mr. W——, and myself pitched upon three of the most

likely-looking ones, and appointed the following morning for teaching the Gallic steeds how to make use of their legs.

We were up betimes, and cantered over to our friend's chateau, as we had informed him we should, and arrived in time to do ample justice to his well-appointed breakfast-table. By noon we were once more in our saddles, and accompanied by our host, who was anxious for a lesson in the art and mystery of clearing "brake and briar."

In somewhat less than an hour we reached the open country, and turned into a large meadow skirting the *commune*, at the foot of which was a very tolerable ditch, which I charged, and with a little persuasion, and a gentle application of cold steel, my Bucephalus accomplished. Mr. W—— got over also, but with some difficulty; Captain P—— was not so fortunate—a difference of opinion

between his quadruped and himself caused him to tarry on the other side in company with our host, who was evidently *asking himself a few questions* before he ventured to put his horse at the yawning dyke.

In less time than I have taken to record the fact, Captain P—— waxed exceedingly wroth, in evidence of which he was belabouring with unaffected zeal the flanks of his refractory animal with one of Swaine's supple hunting-whips. The double-thonging was administered with such energy, that there was little doubt of the affair coming to a speedy conclusion.

After a bountiful thrashing, the horse was wheeled round, and galloped some two hundred yards from the ditch, then faced about and rammed at it, with the rowels vigorously applied to his flanks ; and, I presume, finding the old dragoon



rather too resolute a customer to thwart, cleared it in capital form, and never afterwards refused a leap of any kind.

But where was our host on his stout Norman beast?—still on the wrong side of the ditch ; but, screwing his courage to the sticking-place, he trotted his nag some twenty or thirty yards from the *fossé*, and with both eyes shut, the reins in the *right* hand, and the flowing mane in the *left*, he courageously dug his heels into his horse's sides, and trusted to chance for a safe landing on the opposite bank.

But lo ! what mishaps will sometimes befall adventurous horsemen ! The gallant grey, of Norman extraction, rushed to the ditch, but instead of clearing it, turned sharp round, after the fashion of a Paddington omnibus at the Bank of England, an act of circumambulation that pitched the bewildered Frenchman plump into the middle of the stagnant water, with which

the aforesaid ditch was more than half filled.

Our emulative friend was more frightened than hurt, for, barring the ducking and the unpleasant consequences, no mischief was done. Having given Mr. W—— my horse to hold, I ran to my friend's assistance ; but he, with sound discretion and judgment, preferred scrambling out of his filthy bath on the side nearest his own home, not wishing to encounter the risk of a second ablution by joining us. He told us, at the top of his voice, he should catch his horse and gallop home as fast as he could, and get rid of his wet and soiled garments, but begged of us to ride on and explore the country, and dine with him on our return.

This we did ; and, following his advice, tried our nags at timber and fences, and before the day was over they performed their work cleverly enough, were very fair

timber-jumpers, and proved themselves surprisingly game for half-bred Parisians. We explored about eight or ten miles of open country, and were not a little pleased at the prospect of a good run, in the event of our ejecting a boar from this side of the cover.

We reached the chateau about six in the evening, where we found the owner in perfect good humour, and laughing at his misadventure. He had indulged himself with a hot bath, and some soup, together with a gentle taste of old Cognac to keep the cold out, and was just in proper feather to join us at dinner. As our horses had had a very tolerable breathing on this our first trial, we determined upon availing ourselves of our host's hospitable offer of remaining for the night. I knew the nags would be taken every care of, and that the stables were good; and I thought they would be better off than if

we had ridden them back to Rennes, a further distance of twelve miles.

On our return to town the following morning we found that the owners had manifested some uneasiness at our absence; but on our reporting favourably of the performances of their chargers, they appeared to be highly gratified, to which satisfaction the safe arrival of the horses, I suspect, contributed in some degree.

A meeting was convened at our hotel for the purpose of ascertaining the number of followers we were likely to be honoured with, as well as to name the day, the place of appointment, and other matters connected with our projected sport.

This convocation was attended by all the most influential inhabitants of the town and environs, and a list was drawn up of the volunteers for this (to them)

new method of hunting. The numbers amounted to nearly forty, thirty-five of whom I strongly suspected would not be in at the death ; but as the gentle immersion our host of the chateau had undergone was kept a profound secret, these boar-chasing aspirants little knew what they had to encounter.

The horse I had selected for myself was the property of an ex-officer in the *garde-du-corps* of Charles the Tenth ; and as he had two or three more in his stables of the right sort, the animal was entirely at my disposal. Captain P—— and Mr. W—— were equally fortunate, the gentlemen who had kindly offered the use of their steeds having one or more in their stud for themselves.

I had contemplated getting up a “drag,” by way of giving them a taste of what they would have to do on the grand day ; but being apprehensive that, in case of a

fall or two, their ardour might abate, I abandoned the intention, in order that our field might not be diminished, or our amusement curtailed.

After a good deal of discussion, and a multiplicity of suggestions, it was finally settled that a certain Monday should be the day, the meeting in question having been held on the previous Thursday. As nothing can be done either in England or France with any degree of satisfaction without eating or drinking, I ventured to hint to the assembled Nimrods in embryo that, if Monsieur B—— would allow it, we might dine at his chateau after the day's work was over ; but that the expense of the dinner should be defrayed by the *chasseurs*, for it could not be permitted that our hospitable friend should be saddled with the outlay of feeding some forty hungry fellows—to say nothing of the drinking.

Having extracted a rather unwilling acquiescence in my proposal from the kind owner of the chateau, I laid an embargo on his larder and cellar, and told him I should give instructions to the *maitre d'hotel* and the *chef* to do the needful for the whole party.

I made the bargain with mine host of La Grande Maison that he was to dine us at four francs a head, including a bottle of good *vin ordinaire*, coffee, &c. ; that the chef was to be sent to the chateau, and the expense of transporting the edibles, extra plate, &c., was to be defrayed by himself ; the champagne and *vins de dessert* to be paid for separately, an account of which was to be kept.

This plan was approved of and carried, I cannot say “*nem. con.*,” for the liberal proprietor of the chateau did not like the idea of a dinner being paid for under his roof ; but he was fain obliged to pocket the affront, and hold his peace.

The *ancien garde du corps*, who had so obligingly lent me his best horse, invited us to the *manege*, where a leaping-bar was erected, and over which he advised his countrymen to practise themselves and their nags, previously to the Monday.

We had some very good fun here ; but it is not for me to set down the number of spills the gentlemen contrived to give themselves, but will proceed at once to relate the adventures of the much looked for Monday.

By day-break on the eventful morn, all was bustle, animation, and excitement in the streets ; the *cavaliers* had for their rendezvous the front of our hotel ; and the muster, altogether, was a very respectable one. I had started Collins in the morning, an hour before day-light, with the pack and the bull-dogs ; he was accompanied by the guides and *gardes de chasse*, who had before attended us,



and who were armed with spears and *couteaux de chasse* enough to have exterminated all the boars in Lower Brittany ; added to which, others of their calling had been stationed at a wood, some five miles from the forest, out of which we hoped to drive the boar in the direction we expected he would take.

Two of our mounted friends had strapped on their holsters, and were armed with huge brass pistols, an incumbrance by no means desirable ; at my earnest request, these were left at the chateau where we broke our fast.

Some of the party were for prolonging their stay there, but it was my object to reach the field of action with the least possible delay. We sallied forth in very good order, and, upon the whole, the turn out was an excellent one ; some of the French *cavaliers* were well mounted, and, altogether, the exhibition was very superior to what I had anticipated.

As soon as we were clear of the outer walls of Rennes, we pushed on at a good round gallop, as I was desirous of drawing the wood before the boars were on the move. On arriving at our friend's chateau, I hinted at the propriety of despatching the morning meal with all expedition, just allowing breathing time for the nags ; my proposal was seconded and carried, although some two or three of the chosen band would have preferred a regular set-to at the cold viands.

In about half an hour, with some difficulty, I mustered the recruits, and inspected their stirrup leathers, which, with only two exceptions, were about a foot too long for going across country. I had no easy task in persuading these novices to follow my advice ; I had to contend against long habit and deep-rooted prejudice. The holsters even were reluctantly relinquished ; and it was only when convinced of the dangerous

consequences that might result from retaining them that these bigots consented to their removal.

Behold us, then, once more *en route* for the forest ; but on this occasion we kept to the right, making for the extremity of the wood facing the pasture land, where we had tried the mettle of our steeds some few days before. On arriving at this point, we found Collins, the gallant little pack, the bull dogs, the *piqueurs*, and the guides, all assembled.

The word of command was given to turn the hounds in ; and right merrily did they set to work. The old guide, who was an “artful dodger” in his way, conveyed Collins down a bye-path, some half a mile from the edge of the copse, which, to use our huntsman’s comprehensive phrase, “circumvented the boars entirely.”

The old fellow was right, for we had

not waited in the road adjoining the meadow (wherein lay the dyke which had furnished so unsavoury a bath to our hospitable friend the week before) more than half an hour before some exciting music from the throats of our pack raised our hopes to an agonizing pitch. We were not long kept in suspense, for it was evident they were making for the desired point, and in less time than I can record the fact, a fine young boar, more than three-parts grown, rushed from the covert, crossed the road, and took to the open country.

The uproarious Frenchmen set up such a simultaneous yell, that I much wonder the hog did not wheel about and take to his old quarters ; he was too hard pressed by the dogs, however, to have made this a prudent resolve, so he wisely, and to my infinite satisfaction, pursued his course, edging to the left as he spied the ditch,

which I knew he would not face if he could help it. The great difficulty I had now to contend with was, to restrain the ardour of the uninitiated foreigners, who, if Captain P——, Mr. W—— and myself hadnot interfered, would have ridden over our dogs.

The boar was now taking to some rising ground, and when I conceived that the pack had plenty of field-room, I gave the word *en avant*, and helter-skelter we went across the memorable meadow. It had been my original intention to ride up with the pack, and keep them well together. Before quitting my companions therefore, I begged of my fellow-countrymen to keep an eye upon our French allies, and to check their vivacity. With this parting caution I gave the *garde du corps* quadruped a touch of the cold steel, and rammed him at the ditch, which he cleared gallantly.

I hereby disclaim any mischievous intention in having so done ; whether Captain P—— and Mr. W—— were equally innocent, it is not for me to say ; nevertheless, they followed my example, and got well over, and so did the owner of the horse I was on, and one more gentleman, Mons. de St. H——. But how shall I describe the fate of some of the more adventurous, who, in emulation of ourselves, charged the yawning dyke ? Such a submersion of quadrupeds and bipeds never before was seen.

As good fortune would have it, no serious consequences ensued, although one unfortunate wight was nearly drowned, by reason of his foot catching in the stirrup ; he was dragged out by his less venturesome comrades, and made the best of his way back to the chateau in a most crest-fallen condition.

Captain P——, Mr. W——, and our

two successful ditch-jumpers, pushed on after me, while those who had not been so fortunate as to cross the intervening barrier made a circuit in the hope of joining us. In the meanwhile, the boar kept going at a racing pace, under the slope of some rising ground, in view the whole time, and the scene was highly animating ; the dogs were running breast high, and in full chorus. We met with some rails and hurdles, and a few dry ditches, which were by no means formidable, and the horses took them well.

The animal I was on made one mistake at a gate, and rolled over with me, but I was lucky enough to escape with only a slight bruise, and having been so fortunate as not to lose my reins, remounted, and got well through the day without any further accident.

Our field was a small one ; it consisted for some time of only Captain P——,

Mr. W——, the *garde du corps*, Monsieur de St. H——, and myself. Just as the boar was beginning to exhibit unequivocal symptoms of shortness of wind, two of the straggling horsemen joined us out of the ruck that had been left behind.

Our pack were now running into the boar fast; and I was certain he would never reach the wood, which was still two miles before him. The *sanglier* seemed to be of the same opinion, for as he had been running against the collar nearly the whole of the way, he began to ease himself by swerving to the right, and making for the low ground and some marshes.

This manœuvre was of course equally beneficial to the dogs: they became aware of the advantage, and kept on at railroad speed. I was anxious for the arrival of some of the *gardes de chasse*, or



Collins with the bull-dogs, as we could ill afford to have even one of our reduced pack disabled, which was to be apprehended should the boar face his pursuers.

Monsieur Le Fèvre, the *garde du corps*, had a short spear with him, and Monsieur de St. H—— had a *couteau de chasse*, but I was not certain whether their coolness would be sufficiently under command when called into action at the critical moment. As good luck would have it, the four “B’s,” Blucher, Belcher, Boxer, and Boatswain, our great and powerful allies, were at the heels of the pack, and as eager for the fray as any of us.

“He’s going ! he’s going !” cried my friend Captain P—— ; “by Jove ! he staggers,” he exclaimed. “Yoicks ! we shall have him. Forward, my boys !” and away we went. The pace had been too severe

for the boar, and he was giving in, fast ; the dogs were close upon him. I pushed on at the top of my horse's speed, and I was up in time to whip off the hounds, as the object of their pursuit reeled to the earth. I called out to the *garde du corps* to advance with his spear. He obeyed the summons gallantly, and, riding up, buried the pointed blade deep between the shoulders of the prostrate hog. The bull-dogs were not far off, but before they reached us Monsieur de St. H—— had dismounted and made a frightful gash in the animal's throat with his *couteau de chasse*. He was nearly paying dear for his temerity, for in an expiring effort the boar made an attempt to rush at his legs ; and had he not made good use of them, he would have suffered considerably.

It was now all up with the *sanglier* : another plunge or two from the spear

of Monsieur Le Fèvre did the business, and his life ebbed away in gushing streams from his numerous wounds. As soon as he was *hors de combat*, three cheers were given, as loud and as hearty as any successful candidate at an election need wish to hear. We remained by the fallen prize until the pedestrians joined us, when the pack were regaled with the entrails, according to custom.

Having succeeded in killing our game *à la mode Anglaise*, in compliance with the wishes of the several gentlemen who had joined us, and having shewn them what could be done, I thought it but due to them to return and inquire how they got on ; and I resolved also not to try for a second boar, as I was certain the pseudo chasseurs had seen and *enjoyed* quite enough for one day at least.

Leaving instructions therefore with Collins and the guide to sling the slaugh-

tered boar after the most approved fashion, and bring him to the chateau on the shoulders of the followers, we, who were in at the death, cantered homewards, and in our way met with a dozen or two of the stragglers who had got up a very tolerable imitation of making their way to the scene of action.

We learnt from these gentlemen that some had returned to the chateau, (especially those who had been soused in the ditch,) and that others were endeavouring to catch the dogs.

Upon the whole, therefore, I should say that the glorious anticipations of these would-be sportsmen had not been realized, and that to them the hunt was a decided failure. I could have predicted the same result,—to the majority at least,—but I make it a rule to let people take their fling to the top of their bent.

As far as we were concerned,—I mean

my countrymen and the two French gentlemen who accompanied us—the sport was excellent, far better than I could have imagined it would be ; but the truth is, the *chasse en plaine à la mode Anglaise* is not suited to a Frenchman ; they have never seen it in their youth, have had no example set them, and consequently they know nothing about it. It is not a national amusement or business, as it is with us. The French farmers, too, have no idea of having their land ridden over, and a landed proprietor would as soon ham-string your horse as look at you, if you took a fancy to gallop over his acres.

We got back to the chateau about three o'clock, where we found the gentlemen who had received such a ducking—some between blankets, and some in borrowed clothes—and all around a huge log-fire in the hall : their appearance gave

rise to a great deal of mirth at their expense.

As the dinner hour approached, and the garments dried, good humour found vent ; and as soon as we were seated at the festive board, the sufferers permitted themselves to laugh at their own misfortunes ; and by the time a few glasses of champagne had done their duty, all was jollity, mirth, and frolic.

If the day began disastrously, it ended joyously, for a merrier set of fellows I never pledged in a bumper. Such speeches, such drinking of healths, and such singing I never heard. Like a prudent general, I slept under our host's roof that night, as did my fellow-countrymen, and a chosen few of his particular friends. How the rest of our party reached their homes, I am not prepared to say ; they did manage it somehow or other ; but I much fear, from the black looks I subse-

quently encountered from their spouses, that they sadly misbehaved themselves on returning to their marital duties.

The leave of absence Captain P—— and Mr. W—— had permitted themselves from their establishment at Guimgamp, was drawing to a close ; and as they had undertaken to give up possession at Christmas, they were anxious to return to their old quarters. During our stay at Rennes, we had heard that Quimper, in the Departement of Finisterre, offered many attractions and advantages to the sportsman and economist ;—that the neighbourhood abounded in game of all kinds, and that the trout and sea fishing were superlatively good.

The truth must be told ; my friend Captain P—— was a most restless animal, for ever changing his plans, and seeking after novelty—nothing but Quimper would suit him, and to Quimper he must

go ; in short, he was Quimper mad. It was agreed that during the absence of Captain P—— and Mr. W—— at Guimgamp, for the purpose of breaking up their *ménage*, and removing to the western extremity of Brittany, I should play the part of *avant courier*, and reconnoitre the territory prior to their arrival.

I believe to this day that the boar-hunt *à cheval* drove my friend P—— out of Rennes sooner, by three weeks, than he originally intended. I knew that W—— and himself intended returning to Guimgamp, to deliver up the shooting-box to the banker ; but their going off so suddenly startled me not a little. I knew we should have no peace until P—— had his way, so I bowed acquiescence to all his plans.

Great was the lamentation on the announcement of our departure, and many were the entreaties that we would remain

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and pass the winter at Rennes ; but Captain P—— could not be induced to alter his plan. The dogs were severally returned to their respective owners, and Collins, after being presented with a liberal remuneration, and his travelling expenses paid to Tours, left us to rejoin his former employers, connected with the excellent hunt of that town.

It was not without feelings of sincere regret that I contemplated leaving my friends at Rennes, for nowhere on the Continent had I been received with more cordiality, or experienced such unaffected kindness. About a week before the intended departure of my companions, I proposed that we should give the ladies a party, ere we took leave of them, observing, that, as we had on more than one occasion regaled their husbands to repletion, it would not be fair on our parts to leave the town without displaying a little

gallantry to the fair sex, as well as the sense we entertained of their amiability, affability, *et omne quod exit* in-ility.

A divan was consequently held in my private room, when it was decided that Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself, should give the dear creatures a ball, provided the theatre could be hired for a moderate sum. I was deputed to wait upon the mayor, who we were convinced would kindly undertake to negotiate the affair, without letting the proprietor know for whom the building was required. This precaution was adopted at my suggestion; for, in spite of the high favour in which we stood with all the inhabitants, I knew, from experience, that our continental neighbours will make us Englishmen pay through the nose whenever they can.

Our kind friend, Monsieur le Maire, made the bargain as for himself, and the

price agreed on was a hundred francs.—The Salle du Spectacle being engaged, our next object was to treat with our maitre d'hotel, for the refreshments : this was soon done, and we found him very moderate in his charges.

Invitations were forthwith issued ; the ball took place, and everything passed off as we could have desired ; indeed, our wishes were gratified beyond our expectations, and our guests were polite enough to express the greatest satisfaction, and were profuse in their praises and thanks. We did not give our friends a regular supper, but sandwiches in abundance and of every variety ; to these were added mulled wine, negus, plenty of punch, of which the French of both sexes are remarkably fond, and a bountiful supply of *consommé* and champagne to finish with.

The music was excellent ; in short, all were pleased ;—and the whole expense,

including the hire of the theatre, the musicians, attendants, and our landlord's bill, did not exceed thirty-two pounds ; and for this trifling sum we gave a very splendid entertainment, which is talked of to this day by the town's-people.

## CHAPTER III.

Departure of Captain P—— and Mr. W—— for Guingamp—Bird-shooting in the neighbourhood of Rennes—A visit to Quimper, L'Orient and Brest—Cheapness of living—The Bagnes—How to give a Garde Champêtre a breathing.

My companions took leave of me on the morning of the 19th of December, and posted off for Guingamp. They were accompanied by a dozen of the chasseurs, who rode by the side of their Berline as far as the first post-house, where their final adieus were exchanged.

Our hospitable friend of the chateau, in the neighbourhood of the wood we

had hunted, was quite overcome by his feelings at parting with my companions ; he wept like a child. A more generous, warm-hearted, good-natured fellow, I never met with. He had taken a great fancy to us all, and after he had shaken P—— and W—— by the hand, made me promise to return with him to his campagne, where he undertook to give me some tolerable partridge-shooting, notwithstanding the season was so far advanced.

I complied with his request, for I did not intend to run down to Quimper until the end of the month, as I was under an engagement to dine with Captain G—— and his family on Christmas-day. I accompanied my kind host to his chateau, where we dined *tête-à-tête* ; and over our wine he told me he had excellent sport in reserve for me : he talked of coveys by dozens on his *terre*, besides several others

on the lands of the farmers, who, one and all, he said, had given their consent for me to shoot *partout*.

This was all very pleasant, and far be it from me to impeach the veracity of any one of our continental neighbours ; but, nevertheless, whenever a Frenchman conveys any intelligence to me which he himself is very much interested in, or which, with a proverbial good feeling, he knows will afford gratification, I always (if it be numerically practicable,) divide by three ; by which arithmetical process I generally arrive at something like a true result.

In this instance, my scepticism induced me to resort to my accustomed rule ; and I found, even with my own mental deduction, that I should have no reason to regret having availed myself of Monsieur B——'s kindness. My setters were at Guimgamp, so I was obliged to employ

my host's *chiens d'arrêt*, such as they were. One of them was a very tolerable dog, and performed his work passing well ; at all events, the principal qualification was not wanting,—his nose was good : he found us plenty of birds, and altogether the sport was above par, and much better than I expected.

The red-legged partridge, so common in Brittany, is a very inferior bird to the grey, in point of flavour ; it is comparatively dry, stringy, and tasteless. The plumage is very beautiful certainly, and the trouble they give to get within shot gives an additional zest to the sportsman. They are fit for nothing, however, but soup ; and I can assure the reader that a *purée de perdreaux*, as arranged by the *chef* of the *Grande Maison* at Rennes, is worth crossing the Channel to taste.

There are plenty of birds, both red and grey, all around Rennes ; hares in abun-



dance, and, in the season, a very satisfactory sprinkling of woodcocks ; but all kinds of game are more abundant lower down in the province towards Brest, Quimper, and L'Orient.

Lower Brittany differs as essentially from every other province of France as Wales does from our own counties. The *patois* of the natives is perfectly unintelligible, and is composed of as many consonants, and with the same pleasing admixture of barbarous intonation, as the jargon sputtered by the descendants of Cadwallader.

Some part of Lower Brittany may be termed a wild and uncultivated district ; but the whole of the province presents a variety of attractions to the sportsman. The country abounds in game of all descriptions, and its rivers are plentifully supplied with trout. I have shot all over Brittany, and can take upon myself to

assure the sportsman that it is a country which affords incalculable advantages to all knights of the trigger. A *sine quâ non* with me is economy, and I know not any spot in the habitable globe (and I have visited every quarter of it) that can compare with it. The *paysans* are unquestionably uncouth boors, but so are the lower orders of Welsh. The inhabitants of both countries resemble each other to a shade, for both are obstinate as mules, and stupid as owls.

I would not recommend any of my fellow-countrymen to pull a trigger on Gallic ground without a *porte d'armes*, the price of which is trifling—fifteen francs ; and this sum will secure the shooter from the risk of losing his gun, which is invariably confiscated when the offender is discovered ; and if the unlucky wight be not armed with the talismanic paper, he stands a chance of being rather roughly

handled by the *gens d'armes*, who have strict orders to demand this document from every *chasseur*; but, more than all, it protects the holder from the incivility of these mounted ruffians—a legion of functionaries I abhor most transcendantly.

It was not until the 2nd of January that my friends would allow me to take my departure from Rennes, and only then upon my promising to pay them an early visit. After a cold, comfortless journey, attended with a string of disagreeable delays and stoppages, caused by the execrable roads, I reached Quimper. In the worst possible humour, I took up my quarters at the Hotel de France, and it was a day or two before I could bring myself to comply with the instructions of my *compatriotes*, in exploring the town and its beautiful environs. I soon shook off my fit of spleen,

and had every reason to be pleased with the surrounding country, the town itself, and the extraordinary cheapness of the living.

I had written to Paris, apprising some friends there of the change in our destination, and to request that some letters of introduction might be forwarded to me at Quimper, as the authorities of the town would, in all probability, materially assist us in procuring a house, and forming our plans.

On the fourth day after my arrival I was waited upon by the Procureur du Roi, who did me the honour of introducing me to the Préfet. I was invited to a ball to be holden at the préfecture on the Sunday, and dined with the Procureur du Roi on the day following his visit. His honour the Maire also called upon me, as did the sous-préfet—in fact, *tous les autorités*,—and they one and all did every-

thing in their power to promote the object I had in view.

I heard of a chateau not quite a mile distant from the town, and which was to be let by private contract. The proprietor happened to be a friend of the Procureur du Roi, and the terms he asked were so excessively moderate, and his disposition to oblige so manifestly disinterested, that I at once became his tenant on behalf of my comrades.

I paid for this beautiful place, completely furnished, but six hundred francs a-year, with large gardens and orchards, and a paddock ; in addition to which, a *droit de chasse* on the whole of the owner's extensive property was given, and his influence exerted to obtain us shooting all over the country. The hospitality and attention heaped upon me were particularly flattering, and for all of which I was indebted to my kind friends in Paris, Monsieur de

R——, his Majesty's aide-de-camp, and the Comte de N——.

I forwarded by post a long dispatch to my fellow-countrymen at Guingamp, informing them of the good fortune I had met with, and the comfortable home I had secured for them, and that they would find Quimper *le véritable pays de Cocagne*, as Captain P—— had been led to expect.

The favourable account he had received was by no means exaggerated, and I have no hesitation in saying that Quimper offers advantages to the sportsman superior to those of any other town in Brittany. Shooting of every description is to be met with there—the fishing is splendid—and the society delightful.

The Préfet is a most gentlemanly, well informed man, kind, amiable, and hospitable; and his *confrères* follow the bright example set them—the little *réunions* in the town are especially agreeable,—in

short, I was not a little pleased at my reception. Quimper is decidedly the gayest of the departmental towns in Brittany; at least, I found it so,—it is the *chef lieu* of the Departement of Finisterre, and contains about ten thousand inhabitants.

The Procureur du Roi was polite enough to offer me a seat in his carriage as far as Brest, where his professional services were required, in consequence of one of the felons, condemned for life, having attempted to escape. I was not sorry at the opportunity afforded me of visiting the *bagnes*, and he was so obliging as to procure me an order to inspect this *dépôt* of human depravity and misery.

It is a curious but melancholy sight—a horrid one, I may say. The rules and regulations by which this living hell is governed are rigid and severe to a degree,—the wretches under sentence at this seaport are huddled together, without distinction as to the several shades and cha-

racters of their crimes, or the duration of their punishment. This is surely wrong ; and the demoralizing effect of placing in juxtaposition the youthful delinquent with the hardened criminal is too palpable to call for comment here. One cruelly inhuman law is, the strict interdiction, or rather prohibition, of any communication or intercourse with the other sex. The wives of these degraded men are never, upon any pretence whatsoever, allowed to visit them. This is an unchristianlike and barbarous regulation, and a disgrace to a civilized nation. The consequence is, that the most unnatural and revolting crimes are of common occurrence. They are committed with impunity, if not connived at. One shudders at such atrocities, but they are melancholy facts, and I turned my back upon this modern Gomorrah with feelings of loathing and disgust.

On my return to Quimper, I found that



Captain P—— and Mr. W—— would not be with me for some days, and I determined upon employing the interim in running down to L'Orient, another large seaport town of some importance, although its docks and naval arsenals are not upon so extensive a scale as at Brest.

The distance from Quimper to L'Orient is about thirty miles. This latter town is delightfully and romantically situated in a bight of the bay of Port Louis—it may be called a basin, for it is hemmed in by the land. An extensive trade is carried on in grain and fish. Here you have the Sardinia in perfection as well as at Quimper.

The Lion d'Or is an excellent hotel, and inconceivably cheap—the *table d'hôte* an excellent one—the price for an *habitué*, or regular customer, is thirty-five francs per month for breakfast and dinner. The casual visitor pays thirty sous for each

dinner separately, and half that sum for breakfast. I lodged at this hotel, and paid after this rate, as my stay was only short.

An English gentleman has resided at L'Orient for some years. He was kind enough to call upon me, and I found that he was intimately acquainted with some members of my family, which circumstance soon brought us on very friendly terms. I gathered some useful information from him as to the prices of provisions, house rent, &c., and this, added to my own observations and inquiries, enables me to convey some idea of the rate of living in this part of France.

The necessaries of life were about the same as at Quimper—a little, but very little cheaper. To a person not a sportsman, perhaps L'Orient might be the pleasanter town of the two; but the shooting around Quimper is superior,

and more easily obtained ; therefore I give the preference to it.

L'Orient, however, possesses great attractions, and were it not for the gun, I should be very much inclined to pitch my tent there. It is a remote corner, certainly, to settle down in ; but the market has not yet been ruined by an influx of our improvident countrymen, Mr. S——, the gentleman I have alluded to, being the only Englishman there.

He gave me to understand that the inhabitants were proverbial for their kindness and hospitality, and I had proof, during my short stay, that he had not over-rated their good qualities ; and I can safely say I have seldom passed ten days more pleasantly in my life than on the occasion I am recording. Mr. S—— is a naturalized subject, and the Orientalists look upon him as one of themselves. The only drawback for a family,

probably, would be the distance ; but once there, take my word for it, they would never leave L'Orient.

The route I would recommend would be, by Southampton and Jersey, to St. Malo ; from thence by sea also to Morlaix, and from Morlaix by land. The distance to L'Orient is not more than eighty miles, and the travelling and accommodation are both excellent. Mr. S—— informed me that a very excellent family house can be obtained for about twelve pounds a-year ; a small one for half this sum. Furniture, bedding especially, is cheap—with the exception of carpets, which are dear all over the Continent. Furnished lodgings for a bachelor, such as a sitting-room and bed-room, can be had for about eighteen or twenty francs a-month.

The markets are bountifully supplied, and the provisions are excellent of their

kind. Beef of first-rate quality, five sous per pound ; veal, six sous ; mutton, four sous, sometimes five. Poultry remarkably cheap, and particularly fine: chickens, twenty sous a couple ; full-grown fowls, from thirty-five to forty sous a couple ; capons, a trifle dearer ; turkeys, three francs each ; small ones, less.

The fish is superlatively good and remarkably reasonable:—soles, from three to four sous a pair ; mackerel, from two to three sous each ; turbot, thirty sous to three francs, according to the size ; John Dory, a franc, and thirty sous ; red mullet, two, three, and four sous each. Servants' wages vary from three to four, and five pounds a year, according to their acquirements. A single man may live like a prince upon sixty pounds a year at L'Orient, and so he may at Quimper ; but this is on a grand scale : he could live *respectably* on forty ; and a

married couple could enjoy every luxury with a rental of a hundred a-year.

The wines are brought direct from Bordeaux, and landed on the quay from the vessel, and you may lay in a stock of wholesome beverage at about four-pence-halpenny a bottle. I drank some delicious claret at Mr. S.'s table, really and truly a fine generous wine, that warmed and comforted the inward man, which he informed me did not stand him in more than a franc per bottle. The cheaper wine is a most grateful beverage at dinner, and, although an Englishman, I prefer it to malt liquor.

I returned to Quimper well pleased with my trip, and was anxiously looking out for the arrival of my countrymen from Guimgamp. I had made every preparation for their reception, and, moreover, had laid in a very good stock of wine for them at a very moderate rate.

For lack of better amusement, I was induced to try some marshes between Quimper and Concarnan, on the coast, where I was informed I should find plenty of snipe. I found the swamp in capital order, and full of birds. Unfortunately I had no dog with me, but I had very good sport: although I lost many birds for want of a retriever, I contrived to bring home eleven couple, which, under the circumstances, was a respectable morning's work.

The only instance of incivility and interruption I ever met in this part of the country occurred to me on this occasion, and it happened as follows:—

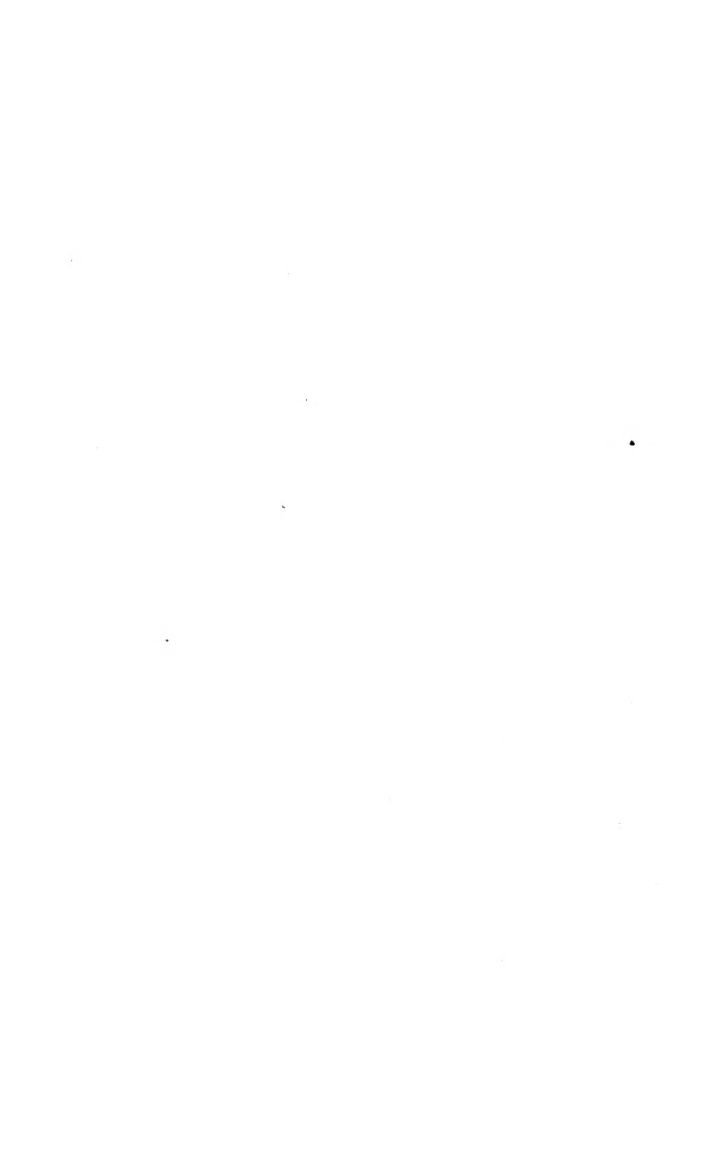
I had just left the swamp and had gained the high road, about nine miles from Quimper, when a *garde champêtre*, a kind of rustic *garde de chasse*, accosted me in a most rude and insolent manner, and demanded my *porte d'armes*, which he in-

sisted upon inspecting. I knew perfectly well that he had no right to do so on the high road, so I determined to punish him, as his aim was evidently to extort money.

I had the required document in my pocket, but I had made up my mind not to shew it him. I pretended to be very much alarmed, and told the gentleman that I had left it at home. This he affected not to believe, and began to bully, adding that he should accompany me to my domicile.

This was exactly what I wished ; for although not quite equal to a Barclay, a Drinkwater, or a Mountjoy, I am a tolerably fast walker for an amateur, and am good for thirty miles in seven hours any day in the week ; so I pulled foot at my best pace, and gave the Frenchman a regular breather. I walked all the wind out of the old fellow's body,







GIVING THE GARDE CHAMPETRE A GREETING  
TO THE GATES OF THE TOWN AT GUMPEL

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for by the time we had reached the gates of the town he was thoroughly done up.

I halted at the *barrière*, and, feeling in my pocket, *accidentally* discovered my *porte d'armes*, which I exhibited to the winded gamekeeper.

No description of mine can convey any idea of his wrath upon discovering the trick I had played him : he gave vent to more *sacrés* in a given time than any Englishman could have uttered for a wager ; and, to fill up the measure of his misfortune, he had the additional mortification of being laughed at by the *douaniers* at the gates. I offered to accompany him to the Procureur du Roi if he felt himself aggrieved ; but the exasperated guardian of the fields did not notice my friendly proposal ; he turned upon his heel, and that was the last I ever saw of the *garde champêtre*.

## CHAPTER IV.

Arrival of Captain P—— and Mr. W—— at Quimper — Their friendly reception by the inhabitants—Our setters admired—Some observations on founding the breed—The history of “Mouche,” and how the author became possessed of her—Retrievers—French and English guns—Proving a Birmingham barrel.

ON the day following the adventure which concludes the last chapter, I had the pleasure of welcoming Captain P—— and Mr. W—— to their new habitation. They arrived *en poste*, with two of the servants; the dogs and heavy luggage were to follow, under the charge of the groom. As may be imagined, I was de-

lighted at meeting them once more, and having them comfortably domiciled under the same roof with me. They found a blazing fire in the *salon*, and the like warm reception in their bed-rooms, which I had taken care should be ready by their arrival.

My old friends and companions appeared much pleased with their new dwelling, and the selection I had made ; and their gratification was by no means diminished when, as we were enjoying our wine *à l'Anglaise* after dinner, I entered into particulars as to the advantages within our reach.

I introduced them in due form to the authorities on the following day ; after which indispensable ceremony the Procureur du Roi was kind enough to present them himself to all the leading families in the place. We were most graciously received, and before the expiration of the week our table was

covered with invitations to dinners, balls, soirées, and suppers ; indeed, the families seemed to vie with each other in catering for our amusement. Our evenings during the winter were passed most agreeably, and when the weather permitted we visited the marshes. Here we found ample employment for our guns ; the snipes in great abundance ; and when we chose to vary our sport, we could always command eight or ten couples of cocks in some alders and brushwood which skirt the higher ground towards Quimperlé.

We occasionally fell in with a few coveys of birds, but the season was drawing fast to a close, and, moreover, having been fired at and frightened by the native chasseurs in the early part of the shooting months, the partridges had wisely betaken themselves to the woods for shelter and security.

In the meadow lands, to the left of the

swamp, we found hares in great numbers, which we shot to present to our hospitable acquaintances in the town, by whom they were much coveted. There are several *soi disant* sportsmen at Quimper, but out of the number only two have the slightest pretension to this honourable title ; they are very tolerable shots, but both their dogs and themselves have much to learn before they can hope to be on a par with even a third-rate performer in this country.

The high courage, good training, docility, and admirable qualities of our setters astonished all the chasseurs in and about the town, and several gentlemen were in the habit of requesting permission to accompany us, for the purpose of seeing our dogs work. They had never heard of dogs backing or dropping to shot ; and their surprise was great on beholding our well-broke animals acquit themselves as all

properly educated dogs should do. “*Mais regardez donc comme ils couchent.*” “*C’est inconcevable !*” they would exclaim, when our setters were in the field or swamp.

It was inquired of me, “*D’où vient elle cette race de chiens ?*” “England and Ireland,” was my reply ; but if I had been asked how the breed was originally produced, I think I should have been puzzled to answer the question. It is hard to say by what means the breed of setters was first established, and I cannot help suspecting that we are indebted to chance and experiment for this beautiful and useful animal.

As the setter is my favourite dog in the field, and decidedly the most useful for general shooting in France, I have devoted much time and attention to the subject, and have even founded a breed of my own. I will here take leave to offer a few observations as to the crosses,



by means of which a superlatively good breed of dogs will be obtained ; and should any of my readers feel induced to try the experiment, I will answer for their success.

The preliminary step is to put a fine-bred and unexceptionable pointer bitch to a noted fox-hound ; you will then have laid the foundation of three essential qualities,—speed, nose, and courage. Docility and sagacity are also requisites, and to obtain these, cross the offspring with the small and slender race of Newfoundland dog. The produce will be as near perfection as possible : they will take to water, retrieve, and for general shooting will be found the very best and most useful animal the sportsman can desire.

Every qualification will be combined in this cross, and their beauty will be such as to entitle them to admission into their master's drawing-room ; and be it under-

stood, the luxury of a hearth-rug and a good fire, by no means tends to render them effeminate, or less hardy in the field.

I had a setter of the softer sex with me in Brittany, which I constantly indulged in this manner, and she was petted and fondled by the whole of our establishment; yet a more perfect animal for every description of sporting never entered a field or beat a swamp. For snipe and wild-fowl-shooting she never was surpassed, if equalled; and, in the depth of winter, when the water has been studded with ice, she would take to it as kindly as in the dog-days. I became possessed of her when she was quite a puppy, and in the following extraordinary manner:—

It came to pass, that, being at Abbeville, in 1829, I was induced to shoot my way to Amiens, *vid* the marshes on the banks of the Somme. On my return, and

when about half way from home, my attention was attracted to a dog in the swamp, which was beating and quartering his ground in a very superior manner : the style of going, the pace, the action, and that indescribable dashing and swinging of the stern, which betrays high breeding, were so unusual in that part of the world, that I was induced to approach the chasseur, whom, to my astonishment, I found to be a Frenchman.

After the interchange of as many bows as would suffice for an Englishman during the term of his natural life, I ventured to observe, “ that he had a nice dog with him.” He answered me by stating that it was a “ *sacré chienne Anglaise*,” and of the “ veritable race,” but that she would not remain close to him, and always beat her ground at too great a distance to suit him.

I then inquired where he picked up

the dog. He told me candidly, that he believed the mother to have been stolen, as she had strayed from the servant of an English gentleman, on the road from Boulogne; that she was in pup at the time; and that the animal before me was one of the litter.

We shot together for a short time, during which I was so taken with the young lady's performances, that I was induced to ask if he would part with her. He said he was not in want of money, but that if I would give him the dog I had with me, he would willingly exchange animals. Now it so happened that the *chien de chasse* by which I was accompanied was a wooden-legged, pottering brute I had upon trial from my friend Isidore Lefort, the dog-breaker at Abbeville.

Far be it from me to pronounce upon the "race" to which he belonged, but I

think I can take upon me to say that he was a *veritable chien Français*. He was half a poodle, with a dash of the spaniel, and perhaps a little blood of a pointer. He was a good retriever, however, and consequently useful in the marshes ; but as for finding a bird, he had no more nose than a greyhound. If I approved of him, I was to have paid twenty-five francs, which sum I thought I could venture to lay out upon this promising pup. I closed with the offer, and the bargain was sealed by a dram from my pocket-pistol.

This *sacré chienne Anglaise* my brother sportsmen had christened “ Mouche.” I had some difficulty in coaxing her away from her master, but a sandwich and kind usage caused her to transfer her affections to me ; and by the time I had killed a couple of snipe to her, we were sworn friends.

She behaved transcendently well all the rest of the afternoon, found her birds in the most artistical style, and never made a blunder. Her nose was superlatively good, and she was as steady as any reasonable man could desire. She was barely six months old, and gave promise of becoming a first-rate dog for snipe-shooting.

I was so pleased with my bargain, that I called upon Captain Rose, of the Navy, the following day, who walked up to my lodgings to look at this *enfant trouvé*; when, to my surprise, the moment he saw her he exclaimed, “By G—! that’s my lost bitch!” The likeness to a favourite old setter, which he had lost near Montreuil seven months before, was so strong, that he could hardly believe it was not poor old Belle, that he had brought from England with him.

She was in pup at the time she had

strayed from his servant, and the sire was a celebrated dog in the Duke of Wellington's kennel at Strathfieldsaye. It turned out, as he suspected, that this pup I had so accidentally stumbled upon was one of his old bitch's litter. He had repeatedly refused sixty guineas for the mother; and notwithstanding our united exertions, and offers of tempting rewards, she never was recovered.

I thus fortunately became possessed of one of the best-bred dogs England could produce. This occurred in the month of August; and as an instance of the innate excellence of this highly gifted animal, on taking her out in the first week of September, although not seven months old, she found, backed, and stood as well as if she had been trained to the work for as many years.

On the first day I shot partridges to her, as she was bringing me a dead bird,

she dropped suddenly, and nothing could induce her to move from her point. I walked up to her, and found a hare under her nose, which I kicked up and shot, to her no small gratification. This is the only instance I can remember of a dog standing one description of game, with another in its mouth; and when the age of the animal is taken into consideration, it must be deemed as most extraordinary.

In recording the precocious excellence of my favourite "Mouche," I cannot resist stating another proof of her remarkable steadiness:—I had been shooting in the swamp close to Abbeville, and had expended all my ammunition, in consequence of finding an unusual number of snipe. It being early in the day, and as there were more birds in the marsh, I determined upon sending a youthful follower (who had accompanied a French gentleman and myself) as far as the Fau-



bourg St. Giles, to Isidore Lefort's, the dog-breaker, for some more powder and shot.

The little *garmin* had scarcely crossed the Somme before Mouche was on a point, and I laid a trifling wager with Monsieur Adolphe Lottin that she would not break it until the messenger's return, if the birds remained undisturbed. The boy came back in about three quarters of an hour, during which period my young prodigy never moved. The gun was of course instantly loaded, and a wisp of snipe were found to have huddled together in some long grass : a couple were killed, and Monsieur Lottin had to pay five francs for his want of faith ; but to this day is loud in his praises and admiration of my invaluable purchase.

In founding a breed, especial attention should be paid to the property and power of scent in both father and mother ; for

nose, after all, is the grand *desideratum*. Symmetry and colour are secondary considerations ; but, of course, where the fancy can be indulged, so much the better. A friend of mine has a dog, and an excellent one too, the breed of which it would be difficult to trace, and I suspect would even puzzle that indefatigable philosopher, Mr. Joseph Hume himself, to discover. I almost blush to write it, but this said animal was begotten, *par hasard*, by a large wire-haired sheep-dog out of a pointer bitch, which had incautiously been taken into the field at an improper period ; but a better dog than one of the offspring of which I am speaking never stood to covey. From whence he derived his numerous good qualities must be left for wiser heads than mine to determine. He had most superexcellent gifts,—courage, speed, steadiness, and an exquisite nose, and no day was too long for him.

I do not adduce this fact with the view that any of my readers should make the experiment ; but I quote it merely as a remarkable instance of the effect of chance producing an offspring endowed with instinctive attributes for sporting purposes.

It would scarcely be less difficult to trace the origin of the retriever ; the remarkable and useful qualities this breed are endowed with are rarely to be met with in any other of the canine race. There is no fixed genealogical principle recognised as to the breeding of retrievers. I have known very good ones of all sorts and sizes. I once tried an experiment myself which answered passing well.

It occurred to me that sagacity was the principal ingredient in the composition of a retriever, and with this idea I crossed a Sussex spaniel, renowned for its exquisite nose, with a large French poodle of

my own, of sagacious notoriety. He was a nonpareil in his way, and could do everything but read and write. The result happily crowned my wishes with success; for the pups, the joint issue of poodle *cum* spaniel, all turned out particularly good retrievers; one is at Quimper at this moment.

A good old setter that thoroughly understands his work will be found very useful in cover for pheasant-shooting, and in some instances is preferable to the yelping tribe. In nine cases out of ten, when a pheasant is wounded, he runs, and continues to do so as long as the babblers are in pursuit of him; but if the dog be mute, the bird will the sooner stop, and is sure to be ultimately found by an experienced setter, and with infinitely less trouble to the sportsman.

I am aware that keepers set their faces

against the use of setters for cover-shooting, as they adhere to the maxim that their masters cannot have too many dogs ; but I can assure my readers that too many dogs, as well as too many servants, are useless animals ; and that where a sufficient number only are kept, whether of bipeds or quadrupeds, for the work required, that work will be better and more effectively done than where a superfluity are supported, to make a show and keep up appearances, to gratify the vanity of the *parvenu*, or the *nouveau riche*.

A really good sportsman will never require more than a brace of good setters, and double that number of pointers. For cock-shooting, of course, the spaniel is indispensable.

Our continental neighbours are fully aware of the superiority of English thorough-bred dogs, and it is impossible to offer a more acceptable gift to a French

country gentleman than a good setter or pointer. During my stay at Quimper, I distributed several puppies out of Mouche, which were begotten by Mr. W——'s setter, Merlin. I had also a brace of young ones, which were forwarded to me from Abbeville. They were begotten by a celebrated dog of Captain Rose's, by name Jack, and he had been kind enough to take charge of the young ones until they were old enough to be serviceable in the field.

I should say that by this time there would be found as good a breed of setters at Quimper, as any person need desire to have ; at all events, I left behind me some of the most promising dogs I ever saw, and I am certain that Captain P—— and Mr. W—— have done all in their power to keep up the stock, and to distribute them judiciously amongst their brother chasseurs.

Before I proceed to describe our opera-

tions in the spring, by the river's side and in the marshes, I will take the liberty of making a few observations on the immeasurable difference between a French and an English gun.

I can take upon myself to say, and I am prepared to prove, that the French armourers are a century behind us in the manufacture of these weapons, as regards material, finish, and workmanship. I have taken some pains to discover the cause, and have had several conversations with Lepage, the best maker in Paris, on the subject.

It is surprising, that for the last quarter of a century, during which the French workmen have had frequent opportunities of seeing English guns, they should not have striven to rival us in this important branch of trade ; but, with the exception of a little extra polish externally applied, their locks and barrels are as

defective, and as imperfectly got up as in 1815.

It is certainly matter of marvel that more accidents do not occur, or, rather, that we do not hear of more mishaps. That they do happen occasionally, I have reason to know ; for in the villages bordering on the swamp at Abbeville, and the Bay of St. Valery, I have seen some miserable *estropiés*, who had been maimed by the bursting of their fowling-pieces.

I am speaking of the French gun-makers generally. Mr. Lepage is, as I have stated, the workman of highest repute in Paris, and I am bound to say, that he is *almost* exempt from the sweeping censure ; that is to say, he can, if he chooses, turn out a very presentable piece of workmanship. These instances are rare. In fact, I never saw but three guns that would bear comparison with any second-rate English doubles, and these



were for noblemen, from whom instructions had been received to spare neither time, trouble, nor expense, in producing the very best guns that could be made—in *Paris*.

The pains lavished on them had been intended more for show than use, after all ; for, on examining the locks, they did not exhibit that exquisite finish, or betray that smoothness of action, that distinguish the performances of our Mantons, Moores, Purdeys and Westley Richards. The French Government would do well to send some of their *armouriers* over to Birmingham, to receive some finishing lessons in the craft of gun-making, for they would then learn the principles upon which our barrels are twisted and bored. At present, they are grossly ignorant of the rudiments of the art, and so will they remain, so long as their foolish jealousy, pride, self-suffi-

ciency, and ignorance, blind them to their own interest.

I am persuaded that if a first-rate English workman were to set up in Paris he would make a fortune. He would, in all probability,—indeed, to a certainty—meet with a strong opposition; but a respectful appeal to the Throne would not only meet with attention, but encouragement; for his Majesty, Louis Philippe, would lend his countenance and support to any English artisan of merit, whose talent would be beneficially exercised in his dominions.

His Majesty employs English engineers on his own estates, and is, moreover, excessively partial to our enterprising countrymen. With such patronage and support, success could not be doubted, if any foreman from one of our celebrated firms were to embark his capital in such a speculation.

I would advise his taking a good supply of tools, and every utensil appertaining to his trade ; for he will not find a file, saw, or chisel fit to use on the other side of the water ; and, notwithstanding the heavy duty, I would also recommend him to import, from this country, his iron, barrel-stubbing, and steel, for the materials he will meet with in France are of a quality very inferior to that he will have been accustomed to here.

There is a peculiar malleability about our English iron that is not to be met with in any other quarter of the globe ; and consequently the perfection to which our gun-makers have arrived is unattainable by the foreign manufacturers.

A curious, and not an uninteresting, exemplification of this came under my own observation about ten years ago.

A gentleman, connected with a highly respectable firm in the gun trade, at Bir-

mingham, was summoned to attend a board, or, more properly speaking, a committee, composed of some of the directors, in Leadenhall Street, respecting a contract for guns, to be shipped to their possessions in the East. The president of this committee was Captain M——, who officiated also as spokesman to the conclave, and, after some preliminary higgling, as to price, &c., the contract was agreed upon. As is customary on similar occasions, several patterns of guns and fowling-pieces were produced before the board, and, from amongst divers samples handed to the contractor, one single-barrelled gun, of foreign manufacture, was selected as the *ne plus ultra* of perfection.

Mr. W. D——, the individual in question, was, rather tauntingly, asked by Captain M——, if he could make such a barrel as the one produced. A modest,

yet firm, affirmation was the reply. Now it so happened that this was a noted little gun, the barrel of which was of Damascus make. A bonus of twenty-five pounds was promised to Mr. D——, the contractor, if he could produce a barrel of English manufacture, and of the same weight and calibre, which would stand the test of proof against it on trial.

The offer was boldly and eagerly accepted by the contracting party, and a day appointed for the experiment, in the East India Company's ground. At the hour named, Mr. W. D—— was there, with a gun turned out by his employers, at Birmingham, corresponding, to a fraction, in weight and calibre, with the "master-piece."

The usual proof-charge of powder was apportioned to each of the guns, under the superintendence of an umpire. They were severally tried with one, two, three,

four, five, six, seven, and eight bullets ; but on being charged and discharged with *nine* bullets, the Damascus barrel flew into a thousand pieces, and was shivered to atoms ; but ten and eleven bullets were fired from the Birmingham gun, without producing any extraordinary effect. However, on the twelve bullets being fired from it, about three inches of the muzzle of the barrel were blown off, and that without materially disfiguring the gun, for the piece was severed as neatly as if it had been filed off ; and it was the opinion of those present that the “ Brummagem ” would have stood one, or even two more bullets, had the last charge (the twelve) been properly rammed down. Nevertheless, the superiority of the British manufacture was sufficiently manifest, and, even without adducing this authenticated fact in support of my argument, I should be

borne out in asserting that our iron is infinitely better than any other.

The best material used for gun-barrels is stub-iron, or old horse-shoe nails : these form the best twist, are tougher, and more yielding withal. We have some justly-celebrated barrel-makers in London. Mr. Fullard stands deservedly high, and so does Squires, of Whitechapel.

I once had a little cover gun, made by the latter, which was a perfect prodigy in its way ; it shot (to use an emphatic Yankeeism) as sharp as “ a flash o’ lightning.” The barrels were of wire-twist ; and a better little gun I never put to my shoulder. It is now in the possession of a young friend of mine, who wheedled me out of it, and is, I have no doubt, dealing death and destruction amongst the North American snipe and woodcocks, the present owner having crossed

the Atlantic to rusticate in the back settlements of Upper Canada.

As I am on the subject of guns, I may be permitted to record the result of a trial which took place in Paris as to the relative merits of the French and English makers, which will form the subject of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER V.

Trial of English and French guns—London *versus* Paris—A *dejeuner de garçon* in the French capital—Trip to Méry—The Champagne country—Some remarks on the wine—How to cure a ropey batch—A remarkable instance given—Return to Picardy—Hints about dogs.

IN the month of August of the year 1828, Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself, received an invitation from Mr. Hubert, the proprietor of some extensive vineyards in Champagne, to take up our quarters at Méry, and shoot quail, which abound in that part of France.

We met by appointment in the Hotel des Etrangers, in the Rue Vivienne (which, *par parenthèse*, is one of the most comfortable houses in Paris), where we found the grower of vines himself, “on hospitable thoughts intent,” beating up for recruits to join his party for the 1st of September in Champagne ; and in Paris as well as London, friends are not wanting under such circumstances.

A very pretty sprinkling of amateurs soon flocked to our hotel, some two or three of whom joined us at the *table d'hôte*. After the bottle had circulated rather freely *à l'Anglaise*, and the politics of the day were discussed, the favourite topic (shooting) was brought on the *tapis*.

Marvellous were the tales told by the several narrators, and great were the feats that each had performed. At length the merits of the owners' guns were discussed, each person leaning with an un-

disguised partiality to his own system of sporting, and to his favourite maker.

To our astonishment, Monsieur Hubert asserted that Monsieur T. G——, a Monsieur de N——, and himself, would produce three guns, made in Paris, that should prove equal, if not superior, to our London particulars ; and he taxed us, moreover, with indulging in an illiberal prejudice by maintaining our opinions regarding the superiority of the English manufacture.

To bring the matter to issue, a wager of three hundred francs was proposed, and which was to be decided on the following morning. Monsieur Hubert, Monsieur G——, and Monsieur de N——, were to meet Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself, in the Bois de Boulogne at ten o'clock, for the purpose of deciding upon the merits of the several guns. I must confess I was nervously anxious as to the

result of the trial, having heard wonders of Lepage's make.

Had a duel been about to take place, more interest could not have been exhibited than on the evening prior to the appointed *rendezvous*. The locks of our guns were carefully examined, and every necessary precaution taken to ensure the victory we anticipated.

It will be admitted, no doubt, that we had some grounds for being sanguine when I state that the three guns we were to bring into the field were from the hands of Mr. Joseph Manton, Mr. Purdey, and Mr. Wm. Moore, of the Edgware Road ; which latter, by the way, was lent me by my friend Mr. B——, at Dieppe.

Before setting out for Paris, I had been in hopes of receiving my own gun from Mr. John Manton, to whom I had sent it to make a trifling alteration ; but it did not arrive in time—much to my

disappointment—for I had made a match to shoot with my favourite double from Dover-street, against a celebrated Purdey in the possession of Mr. Martin Hawke. Of course the match did not come off; and the failure cost me a dinner at the Hotel Royal at Dieppe.

It was subsequently forwarded to me in Paris, and was the gun I used during our first crusade against the boars in the neighbourhood of Guingamp. But to return to our match.

At the stated hour we were on the ground with our gun-cases in the Bois de Boulogne, and had not waited long before our antagonists made their appearance, accompanied by Monsieur Lepage, the renowned maker of crack guns in the French metropolis.

As soon as our opponents had extricated themselves from the crazy *fiacre* which had brought them to the scene of

action, and after a friendly and cordial greeting on both sides, the guns were paraded in due form. Monsieur Lepage had accompanied the backers of his guns, and had brought a ream of coarse whited-brown paper for us to fire at.

It was stipulated that we were all to use the same powder and the same sized shot, but that each party were to load as they pleased.

Monsieur Lepage now stepped forward, and requested to know the number of yards at which we had agreed upon as the distance. I named fifty. “*Mon Dieu !*” exclaimed the finisher of French *fusils*; “*c’est trop loin.*” He modestly asked me to try twenty-five or thirty, as a fair test. I replied by inquiring, as gravely as I could, whether ten would not answer his purpose better.

At length, after a great deal of good-natured, playful altercation between our

friends and ourselves, forty-five yards were agreed upon. The ground was duly measured from a certain tree, against which was nailed a quire of the before-mentioned whited-brown paper.

Monsieur Hubert commenced operations, and lodged twenty-nine shot in the paper, but not half of the quire was *perforated*. Another quire was nailed up, when Monsieur G—— took his shot; twenty-three grains struck the sheet, but did not penetrate through more than eight or nine sheets of the paper. Monsieur de N—— then took his ground as soon as Monsieur Lepage had placed a fresh quire before him. He fired, and lodged thirty-two shots in the target, but still many sheets of the quire were untouched. I was now confident that they had no chance against us. We fired in the following order, changing the quire at every shot.

	No. of grains of shot.
Captain P—— . . Joe Manton . .	54
Mr. W—— . . . Purdey . . .	63
Myself . . . . W. Moore . .	69

Every sheet (and there were twenty) was perforated, and the bark of the tree itself considerably indented.

The Frenchmen seemed thunder-struck, and Monsieur Lepage was terribly crest-fallen. The shooting of our guns was incalculably superior. All three of Monsieur Lepage's guns scattered excessively, particularly the one used by Monsieur Hubert. In contradistinction, the one I had, and which was made by Mr. Moore, shot very closely, and was certainly as good a gun as I ever met with; I used it during our little excursion to Méry, and committed great havoc amongst the quail and partridges.

After several energetic *sacré nom de Dieus*, we were requested to shorten the



distance to thirty-five yards, but with no better success on the part of the Parisians, and at last they were obliged to acknowledge themselves as fairly beaten. Before leaving the Bois de Boulogne, I fired at four sheets of thick cartridge-paper at the distance of seventy yards with Mr. Moore's gun, and lodged forty-eight shot, which went clean through every sheet, and penetrated the bark of the tree. Monsieur Lepage offered me a thousand francs for the gun, which, not being mine, of course I could not part with; but if it had, I should not have sold it for double the sum.

We returned to Paris to breakfast; and a French *dejeuner à la fourchette* is a matter of no little importance. We all adjourned, with the exception of Monsieur Lepage, to the Rocher de Cancale, the house *par excellence* for a true Parisian breakfast.

First comes the succulent *huitre d'Ostende*, a dozen or two of which it is orthodox to swallow prior to the discussion of the dainties which await you in this temple of Epicurism.

These delicate little *avant couriers* are washed down with a glass or more of iced *chably*, by which time, it is presumed, the appetite is whetted to the proper pitch for attacking the more substantial fare. The oysters are succeeded by the appetizing *cotelettes à la tartare*, kidneys stewed in champagne, *poulets à la Marengo*, a *pâté de foie gras*, and the meretricious *dinde aux truffes*. These are the condiments that constitute a *dejeuner de garçon* in Paris ; and of all this fascinating food did we partake after our popping-match. Every sort of wine in the host's *cave* was tasted, from humble port to imperial Tokay.

To an Englishman these vinous breakfasts are oppressive in the extreme, and

the apprehension of being *consarned in liquor* before dinner, to say nothing of the flushed face, the heat, the thirst, the indigestion, *cum multis aliis* of horrors, detract considerably from the animal gratification of feeding *à la mode de Paris*. I did not recover from the effects of this morning's excess for some time ; I felt drunk for a week.

After all, and not being over-particular, I am satisfied with some of Twining's best green, a muffin, a new-laid egg, and an occasional layer of tongue—as far as breakfast is concerned ; but commend me to Very for a *recherché* dinner. His soups *à la Reine*, *filets de soles*, *vols au vents*, and *Marengos*, are, like Mr. Hunt's blacking—matchless.

We left Paris on the 28th of August, and arrived at Monsieur Hubert's chateau, near Méry, in Champagne, the following day. To the Englishman who

may not have had the opportunity of travelling much in France, the word “chateau” sounds inconceivably grand, and he would expect to find a magnificent castellated mansion, surrounded by a spacious domain ; but, on the other side of the Channel, the word “chateau” conveys a less dignified meaning. We were, consequently, not disappointed on driving up to a moderately-sized tenement of stone, on the banks of the Seine ; but whatever lacked of grandeur was amply made up for in hospitality and kindness. A more friendly reception never welcomed a guest than we experienced from Monsieur Hubert.

We were domiciled for three weeks under his roof, and our time was passed most agreeably. He kept open house during our stay, and what with feasting, dancing, drinking, shooting, and other little diversions, we had a very merry

time of it. The partridges were very plentiful, and as for the quails, they were literally in swarms in the neighbourhood of the vineyards and the plantations of hemp ; the numbers were inconceivably great, perfectly incredible ; and he who desires to eat this delicate bird in perfection, should run down to Méry, from Paris, and if he do not thank me for the hint, there is no gratitude extant.

And then the wine ! I could write a library in its praises. The champagne-drinker of this country would scarcely recognise his favourite beverage were he to taste the wine as made on the spot, so great is the difference between the exhilarating nectar, as drank at the vineyard itself, and the wine we so much covet here. They are both champagne wines, it is true. Hodgson's pale ale, and table-beer, are both malt liquors ; but which is

the best ? And, as Hodgson's pale ale is to small beer, so is the champagne at Méry to the champagne, in England—*Q—E—D—*.

Now, having established my position, I will proceed to inform my readers why this is. My authority is derived from the fountain-head, Monsieur Hubert himself. He is one of the largest landed proprietors in the country, and decidedly one of the most respectable of its merchants.

I learnt from him, and I was unacquainted with the fact, that the wine of Champagne is but a sorry traveller, deteriorates in quality by land-carriage, and is invariably sea-sick on a voyage. Of the truth of his assertion I am thoroughly convinced, for I never, in any country, or at any table, tasted such wine as I did during this excursion. I speak not of any choice specimens, such as were produced at Monsieur Hubert's own table,

or at the houses of the other wine merchants in and about the town of Méry, but of the common run of first quality champagne, to be drank or purchased at an hotel, or of any dealer in wines.

Monsieur Hubert related an anecdote to me of a large batch of champagne which he forwarded to this country, and which tends to corroborate his assertion. He had received a large order from the Marquis of Hertford, to send him three or four hundred dozen of the very best wine that could be procured; more than usual pains were bestowed to select the very choicest specimens.

The champagne was sent and duly received—a very high character accompanying the consignment as to its quality; and Monsieur Hubert assured me that finer wine never left his cellars. His dismay and disappointment, therefore, may easily be conceived, upon his receiving a

letter from the Marquis's steward, informing him that this much vaunted wine was not drinkable ; a request was added, that Monsieur Hubert would send a confidential person in his employ over to England to satisfy himself as to the fact. Monsieur Hubert's head cooper was accordingly shipped off to this country, and on his arrival in London found every bottle of the celebrated wine as ropy as linseed tea.

At the wine cooper's request a large vat was procured, into which the whole of the wine was emptied ; by a certain process, known only to this cooper, he recovered the precious liquid, and restored it to its pristine excellence. The champagne was re-bottled, corked, wired, and resined ; and I have no doubt that the creaming nectar which the noble Marquis distributes, with his wonted liberality, to the guests at his hospitable board comes



from the stock which was supplied by Monsieur Hubert from Méry.

Monsieur Hubert attributed its *maladie* to the delicate and superior quality of this wine, which was so suddenly affected by the sea-voyage and change of climate. I have no doubt the wine is good to this day, and very palatable, but I very much question if it has ever regained its original flavour and excellence.

It is possible that many of my readers have never tasted the second growth of champagne wine, the *petit vin*, or *tisanne*, as it is termed by the natives ; this truly delicious beverage can never be procured out of the wine country, for it will not bear the carriage even up to Paris ; but it is worth a pilgrimage to Champagne to partake of ; for I know not a more delicious or refreshing draught to the thirsty and wearied sportsman than this cooling and effervescing thin potation

affords. It is sold at every *cabaret* in the country, as ale, beer, and cider are with us ; the price varies from eight to twelve sous the bottle ; it is sold likewise from the cask by the *litre* ; it is, in truth, most grateful and refreshing stuff ; and, more than all, there is not a headache in a hogshead of it.

Our engagements in Picardy and Normandy compelled Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself, to leave the jovial party congregated beneath Monsieur Hubert's roof. We quitted Méry with unfeigned regret ; and should circumstances admit of my visiting Paris once more, I shall not fail to extend my trip as far as the flats of Champagne, where it will afford me heartfelt pleasure to renew the acquaintances I formed during my short stay amongst them.

On my return to Paris, I found my favourite John Manton gun at the Hotel

des Etrangers, it having been forwarded to me from Abbeville. I was therefore afforded an opportunity of trying it against M. Lepage's supernaculums, and found it shot quite as well as the William Moore I had with me ; better it could not. I had several learned conversations with Monsieur Lepage on the subject of guns and gun-making, and I found him, *when alone*, a very reasonable person.

He very candidly acknowledged that the workmanship and material of the English guns were superior to anything he could produce. He is a clever and an enterprising mechanic, and has taken infinite pains to make himself a proficient in his craft.

There is one point to which he pays particular attention, and that is the exact proportion of charge suited to each gun that he sells—this is an example well worthy of imitation by our own makers. My own observation and experience

enable me to assert, that this very essential point is but too frequently neglected by even the first-rate firms in this metropolis.

No two guns shoot alike ; and it is only by unremitting attention to their various powers of throwing shot that their respective merits can be proved. Some guns take less powder and more shot, and *vice versa*; and many pounds of both have been expended before the desired end has been accomplished. I have known guns to have been actually condemned, as wanting in almost every requisite, which have eventually proved superior to those of reputed and tried excellence.

I can picture to myself the novice furnished with one of Manton's best doubles, with all the appurtenances to boot—a gift from his indulgent governor, uncle, or aunt—sallying forth in the grey of the morning, with old Ponto at his heels.

I will take it for granted that he starts

armed with salutary hints and cautions ; but I can venture to affirm that he will not have exercised his patience by trying his new toy at a given reasonable distance (say forty yards), for the purpose of ascertaining the exact proportion of powder and shot suited to his barrels.

This, I admit, to a young beginner is a tedious and an unentertaining process, and occasions a vast expenditure of powder, shot, and paper ; but I earnestly recommend the experiment to the young and to the old. In causing the gun to undergo this test, the value of the piece will be materially enhanced by the knowledge of its powers, which can never be ascertained but by the perseverance of its owner.

Partridge shooting in the present enlightened age is reduced to a science, and is as much a game of observation, position, and tenace, as whist itself. Obser-

vation, inasmuch as without it no person can ever hope to be a sportsman ; position, for on placing yourself will materially depend the filling of your bag ; tenace, as it rests with yourself, and the aid of your dog, to command success.

A man to be a sportsman must have been born with a predilection for this healthy pastime, or, as my friend Mr. Deville would say, with the bump of philo-detonativeness strongly developed. *Poeta nascitur non fit* ; and the same rule is to be applied to the knight of the trigger. But how many lovers of field sports of the present day, assume to themselves the title of sportsman without the slightest ground for such assumption, or perhaps, more properly speaking, presumption ! How very few of those who enter the field possess the necessary qualifications to entitle them to such an enviable distinction ? Patience, observation, presence

of mind, and, above all, good temper, are indispensable ; and yet how rarely are these qualities united in one and the same person !

Nine men out of ten who carry a gun defeat their own intentions by intemperately and injudiciously rating the faithful quadruped which is administering to their gratification ; when, by letting the dog follow the dictates of the surpassing instinct with which he is gifted, they would find the animal to have been in the right.

No person who is not a first-rate sportsman should attempt to break a dog, especially a setter ; for by this self-imposed task he will in all probability ruin the animal, and acquire such a habit of belabouring his dumb companion as to render himself unworthy of possessing a good dog.

There are dog-breakers by profession in abundance, both in the vicinity of

London and in every country town ; and I can undertake to assure my readers that they will find it cheaper in the end to submit to the expense of having their dogs tutored *secundum artem* by an experienced hand. Notwithstanding my predilection for the setter, I would recommend the neophyte to take the field with a stanch old pointer.

However strange it may appear, he must submit to be instructed by his dog ; but it must be a good one ; for it would be next to cruelty both to the man and to the beast—but particularly the latter—to entrust a young, high-couraged, hot-headed, self-willed dog to a beginner.

The setter, however, is a noble animal, both in disposition and appearance ; he is endowed with more sagacity than the pointer, and in point of courage and speed all the world knows he is immeasurably superior. Where the breed is very choice,



and, to use an Oriental term, the dogs are of "high caste," in nine cases out of ten the setter supersedes the necessity of a retriever ; and it would be superfluous to point out the advantages my favourite animal possesses in a woody country, where wounded birds would inevitably be lost under the *ancien regime* of shooting to pointers alone.

It frequently happens that pointers are foot-sore, and consequently useless in a stony country ; whereas the setter, being by nature furnished with ample protection to his feet, is seldom, if ever, unfit for work from this cause. I shot for three seasons consecutively (including the spring, when the snipe were in the marshes) with my invaluable god-send "Mouche," and never took any other dog out with me, and she was never on the doctor's list for an hour.

I would take the liberty of recom-

mending to all masters—and herein more especially the young sportsman—to pay particular attention to the feet of their dogs after a long day in dry weather, and where the soil is hard and exposed much to heat.

Some gentlemen of my acquaintance, on reaching home, leave their dogs to the care of a domestic, thinking that by *ordering* their animals to be fed and consigned to the kennel they have requited the faithful beast for his day's labour : not so ; and the palpable negligence of consigning a good and serviceable dog to the casual attention of an uninterested, uneducated menial, savours (to me) of ingratitude, to use no harsher term.

A really good sportsman is ever mindful of his sagacious and faithful companion in the field, and ascertains himself, and considers it a paramount duty to do so, that his dog is properly attended to.

The first thing to be looked after is, the state of the animal's feet ; they should be carefully examined, and washed with warm water and plenty of soft soap ; it is astonishing the relief this simple application affords ; these ablutions finished, the feet should be rubbed dry, and the dog then fed. He should have a plentiful supply of good clean straw, and abundance of room to stretch himself.

Every one knows that after a hard day's shooting there is nothing so refreshing as a tepid bath, more particularly to the feet ; and it is idle to suppose that the dog is not as susceptible of the luxury as the master—the benefit arising to both is manifest ; and the setter or pointer, with this care, which common humanity ought to point out, will invariably be fresher, more capable of enduring fatigue, and be up to his work during the whole season ; when by neglecting his comfort by trust-

ing to a servant, the chances are, your dog will be knocked up in a month.

I speak from experience and practice, and could adduce numberless instances in support of my argument.

Where the *locale* admits of the enjoyment of wild-fowl shooting in the winter, the dogs employed for this purpose should have a greater share of care and attention, and warmth should be afforded them with an unsparing hand.

By some I shall doubtless be thought over particular and fastidious ; but I do not hesitate to say, that during the whole of the time I was in France I devoted, in the winter season, a brick-floored room in an out-house, to the use of a setter and retriever. It had a large open fireplace, and while my *tenants* were occupied in seeking sport for their master, a large wood fire was kindling on the hearth to welcome them on their return home.

This indulgence, however, I only granted in *very* severe weather, or when the dogs had been much in the water during the day.

It would be needless to dwell upon the comfort and enjoyment the dog must derive from the warmth ; but it may not be irrelevant to point out the advantages arising from this humane proceeding.

Let any man ask himself how he would relish being lodged in a cold, damp, out-house, without bed or fire, in the month of December or January, after having been wet to the skin all day in a swamp ? My sagacity inclines me to answer for the gentleman, “ not at all.” Then why, I ask, should not the health as well as the comfort of the dog be consulted ?

From the unpardonable neglect I have hinted at, dogs are frequently afflicted with chronic rheumatism, more especially setters ; and too much care cannot be

aken to give them the opportunity of warming and thoroughly drying themselves before a good fire, the expense attendant upon which will prove a saving in the long run.

I adopted, both at Abbeville and at Quimper, the plan of allotting for each dog a very large round wicker-basket employed for wild-fowl shooting, about three parts filled with clean straw, or fine deal shavings, on which was laid a large fold of strong drugget, or coarse blanket. As my fire was composed of logs, and consequently in an open fire-place, a high common wire fender was placed around it to prevent the dogs approaching too nearly, or lying in the ashes, of which they are very fond.

Where the animals are all of the male sex, it will be found the better plan to allow a separate wooden bowl or platter

for each to feed out of ; for every dog, like the beggar, “ knows his own dish,” and consequently much dissension and fighting will be avoided.

With regard to the food to be recommended, I should say that in France the *pain de munition*, the coarse brown (or shall I say black ?) bread served out to the troops is beyond compare the best. In every departmental town on the Continent will be found a *garnison*, and the soldiers will cheerfully exchange two brown Tommys for one white loaf. This was the plan I went upon, and found it to answer marvellously well. The bread thus obtained was boiled down in pot-liquor. If our kitchen occasionally yielded none, some sheep’s heads, or half a bullock’s, were purchased for a mere trifle ; and the broth or soup answered admirably. I avoided all kinds of raw meat, for I am persuaded it annihilates

one of the most valuable properties in a dog—the nose. I hold meat of any kind to be objectionable ; it should be stewed, and the juices thoroughly extracted from it, and then the soup may be given with the bread soaked in it.

At home—I mean in Old England—I substitute the commonest and coarsest sea-biscuit ; and when this cannot be procured, where the distance from a sea-port town is great, the oaten cake, or coarse barley bread, will be found to answer equally well. Both are extremely nourishing ; and when steeped in pot liquor, is as well relished as the *pain de munition* of La belle France.

Setters in general are foul feeders, and eat voraciously ; and if care be not taken to counteract the effects of gluttony, much evil will result. All dogs generate bile quicker than any other animals ; and the stomach should be cleansed of all im-



purities by occasional doses of medicine. Some of my friends administer the blue pill as an alterative, but I am not as yet a convert to the system, as I am of opinion that the only admissible purgatives are salts and castor oil; and these will keep the dog's body in a proper state. The peristaltic persuaders so much in vogue with some enterprising dog-doctors only tend to tuck the animal up and irritate the intestines.

When young dogs are *vermicelliciously* inclined, the following is an excellent remedy; indeed, I have never found it to fail:—Pound some glass in a mortar until it is perfectly pulverized, and as fine as magnesia; give the dog as much as will lie on a sixpence every other day for a week. To make it palatable, and to ensure its safe and steady transit to the stomach, rub the powder down in a piece of dripping, or butter, the size of a wal-

nut ; on the intervening days, give him (fasting) three table-spoonsful of castor oil, (lamp oil will do, *faute de mieux* ;) and before the last dose is administered he will have parted company with all his worms.

In calling the attention of the sportsman to the state of his dog's feet after a long day it is to be remarked that, in wild fowl and snipe-shooting, they may become too soft, in which case astringents should occasionally be applied. If the feet be washed with strong brine, this evil will be obviated, and the remedy, however simple, is very efficacious, and can be procured on all occasions.

## CHAPTER VI.

Setters again—Anecdote of “Right,” a celebrated dog—A few remarks upon simple shooting—Guns and gun-makers—Ball-shooting with a John Manton—Westley Richards and the Bishop of Bond Street—Back-action lock—Rifles to be preferred for boar-shooting—Rifle-shooting in America.

THE only objection having a shadow of reason to back it, and which has been urged against the setter, is the difficulty of breaking him thoroughly, and rendering him sufficiently tractable to hunt with other dogs. I admit that great patience and an unusual proportion of good temper are required to bring a high bred setter to

a proper degree of subordination ; but then, I will ask, when these difficulties are surmounted, is not the master repaid in a tenfold degree for the expense, time, and labour he has bestowed upon the animal ? Surely the most stubborn sceptic will acknowledge that I am justified in asserting that he is.

It has been my lot to own some few, and to meet with many, of the wildest dogs of this breed ; but, by perseverance, they have been conquered at last, and have ever proved the stoutest and stanchest animals. A friend of mine became possessed of one of the most headstrong devils that ever was fired over, yet he turned out one of the very best dogs I ever remember.

He belonged some years ago to a Colonel M——, stationed at Tilbury Fort, who, however good a marksman at his country's foes, was perfectly harmless in

the field—as far as the partridges were concerned. The dog in question was considered by his master as perfectly indomitable—so much so, that, either disgusted at his own lack of skill, or the dog's self-will, he was induced to part with him to the friend I have alluded to for a very moderate sum.

The dog was taken from Essex into Kent, and consigned to the care of one of the very best dog-breakers of his day—old Wells, the old and faithful keeper in the service of the late Lord Darnley. In such hands there was no lack of instruction, and the noble preserves of Cobham furnished abundance of subjects for the dog to practise upon. In less than three weeks the animal turned out to be one of the most perfect creatures of his kind ; and old Wells has frequently been heard to declare, that although “ Right ” (the dog's name) gave him more trouble

than any quadruped that ever came under his hands, he was never *wrong*, and would find more birds than all his lordship's kennel put together. Independently of fetching his game in very superior style, he was an excellent retriever.

On one occasion, I remember particularly, on returning home in the evening with his master, after a hard day's shooting, the dog stopped at the side of a hedge; he was walked up to and encouraged; he dashed in, and up got a fine cock pheasant. The bird was hit hard, and he towered, but went off at least a quarter of a mile. "Right" was sent after him, although we could not see exactly the direction he was taking, as we were much below the ground he had to pass over. We ascertained afterwards that the dog had gone through a cover, had swam a canal, and crossed several ditches. He returned to us after an ab-

sence of about five-and-twenty minutes, with the bird in his mouth.

Poor “Right” is now gathered to his forefathers; but, with the exception of being a little wild after any temporary cessation from his duties in the field, I agree with my venerable friend Mr. Wells in pronouncing him one of the stanchest and best setters on record.

A man, to become a really good snipe shot, must practise for several seasons before he can hope to arrive at perfection. Independently of its diminutive size, the snipe, on rising, makes such rapid turns, and flies so *crookedly*, if I may be allowed the expression, that a very good partridge shot may cut but a sorry figure in a marsh.

Nothing but great practice, patience, and coolness\* will overcome the difficul-

\* It is known to all snipe-shooters that when the bird rises he makes a screaming noise, resembling

ties which present themselves to the follower of this fascinating sport ; for nine sportsmen out of ten, who have become tolerable proficient in this branch of their education, will acknowledge that they have felt more real pleasure in bringing down a couple of snipe in a marsh, than five brace of birds in the field ; and so it is in the every-day occurrences of life : the greater the difficulty in obtaining any given object, by so much is the satisfaction increased in possessing it.

Sportsmen of the old school adhered pertinaciously to the plan pursued by their forefathers, of shooting with an old, broken-down pointer ; but, in this enlightened age, we know better ; and any

the sound of the word “ escape.” A friend of mine, a noted shot, invariably exclaims, “ I’ll be d——d if you do !”—giving as a reason, that it affords him time to take his aim coolly and collectedly. The plan appears to succeed with him, for a snipe rarely “ escapes” from his merciless barrels.



one who has any pretension to knowledge in these matters is aware that the setter is indisputably the dog best suited for this species of sport.

The setter, if properly bred from the crosses I have before pointed out, will turn out naturally a water dog; and where the swamp is intersected by small rivers, gulleys, and wide ditches, an animal of this kind is indispensable.

The snipe, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, flies against the wind; the shooter will therefore beat his ground accordingly, to secure to himself the certainty of a cross shot—the grand *desideratum* in snipe-shooting.

If an eccentric bird should, contrary to the custom of his tribe, take to wing down wind, the chances of escape are greatly in his favour; for his flight will be so rapid, his twistings and turnings so bewildering, especially to the unpractised

eye, that he usually gets off with a whole skin ; but, on the other hand, if one stray shot hit him, he is done for, by reason of his body being more exposed, and his feathers in this position affording no protection.

Snipes invariably lie better in warm than cold weather, particularly single birds. In wisps they are generally wild, and, on their first arrival after a flight, are frequently unapproachable. Much will depend upon the goodness and *cunning* of the dog in such cases.

It is a good plan, in long, high grass, weeds, or rushes, on arriving near the spot where you have killed your bird, to throw down your hat or cap as a guide in searching for it. This precaution, however, is only to be practised when your dog happens to be otherwise engaged on a point elsewhere.

A curious circumstance occurred to me

at Abbeville in 1829 :—My lady-like setter, “ Mouche,” was standing some snipe, one of which was shot to her ; but as she never moved from her original point, it was an understood thing between us that more birds were before her. As soon as I had loaded I threw down my cap, as I thought, near the spot where the first bird fell, and returned to the dog, and killed another bird to her. Upon going back for the first bird and my cap, I could not find the bird, and, after expending some time and trouble, gave up the search. On picking it up, however, to my astonishment I found the snipe *under* it ; so accurately had the spot been marked.

As far as my observation and experience enable me to form an opinion, I should say that we must yield the palm to our Gallic neighbours, both as to the quality and quantity of their marshes and

swamps, as well as the profusion of snipe with which they abound.

The whole of Picardy, Lower Normandy, and Lower Brittany, are literally swarming with them. It would, therefore, as I have before said, amply repay the enthusiastic lover of wild-fowl shooting to take a trip to Abbeville in the winter. A more favoured spot for this species of amusement is not to be found. The distance is nothing—in fact, but a two-days' journey from the Tower stairs. If the amateur start from London in the morning by the steam-boat, he will arrive at Calais in the evening, and the following day, the Paris diligence will set him down at the *Titty de Buff*, (as I once heard an accomplished country-woman of mine call the *Tête de Bœuf*,) at Abbeville, in the afternoon.

As a matter of course, he will visit the

marshes, and, if he be a good shot, I will ensure from ten to fifteen couple of snipe every day in the season. I would advise the stranger, before he ventures alone on the banks of the Somme, to send for my friend Isidore Lefort, the professional *chasseur* and dog-breaker of whom I have made mention. He dwelleth in the Faubourg St. Giles, and, for the trifling remuneration of a franc, and an occasional *goutte* of *eau de vie*, he will be happy to escort any knight of the trigger, and shew him the marshes. This precaution will be found necessary, for without a guide in the first instance, the inexperienced visitor might chance to make his exit in one of the many treacherous bogs which abound in these marshes. Monsieur Isidore is a very civil fellow, a very fair shot, and (for a Frenchman) a tolerable sportsman.

I had contemplated causing a few

hundred circulars to be lithographed, by way of presenting my readers with letters of introduction ; but, as this proceeding might be attended with inconvenience, I can save them and myself any further trouble by merely requesting any one or more of my friends to whisper the word “ Mouche ” in Isidore’s ear. It will operate like magic, and ensure, not only additional civility and attention, but also an induction to some particular nooks and corners in a certain part of a certain swamp, where only a chosen few are permitted to pull a trigger.

My readers will, I hope, have borne in mind my recommendation of Monsieur Duflos’ matchless fen-boots ; and should any snipe-shooter ever venture as far as Abbeville in pursuit of his favourite diversion, he will, I trust, make trial of them. His health and comfort will be materially improved,—indeed, no one who

has not experienced the blessing of having been fitted by this renowned son of Crispin can form any idea of the luxury of his pliable casings for the extremities. They are as supple and flexible as a silk stocking, and impervious to wet — in short, inconceivably delightful to the bog-trotter.

I have already adverted to the superiority of the English over the French guns, both as regards material and workmanship. The difference in price is certainly great, and I must acknowledge that the sum demanded by our crack makers is rather exorbitant,—but, if the sportsman wish to have a really good gun, he must expect to pay a good price ; and I am convinced there is no real economy in buying an inferior article. I have an innate horror of cheap things of any kind ; and as to a cheap gun, I mean,

one turned out by a third-rate mechanic, —I shudder at the thought of it.

Notwithstanding the aversion, or prejudice, as it may be termed, which I shall ever entertain for low-priced guns, I am free to confess, as the parliamentary phrase goes, that the magi in the gun trade, with only one exception, charge too much for their first-rate doubles, and that exception is Mr. Westley Richards.

I trust, however, that the day is not far distant when our leading gun-makers will form a kind of Joint-Stock Company, and reduce the price of their fowling-pieces. I know that it *could* be done, for I am in the secret, and I could also tell them how, and still leave them a fair and reasonable profit,—but blabbing is not my *forte*.

The French phrase of “*l’embarras du choix*” is peculiarly applicable in the



selection of a gun, for where the manufacture is brought to such a pitch of perfection, as in the present day, by the two Mantons, John and Joseph, Purdey, William Moore, and Westley Richards, Forsyth, &c., it is hard indeed to choose. Each of these celebrated firms have their patrons and admirers ; and the sportsman must be fastidious indeed who could find any fault with the workmanship.

I have recorded the merits of the John Manton gun I had with me at Guimgamp—for ball shooting I never saw it equalled,—but all the guns from Dover Street are renowned for this quality ; hence the reputation they have gained for themselves in India. I may say that during my campaign at Monsieur de C——’s chateau, I was indebted for my life to the excellence of this gun ; for had it not carried a ball in such a superior and rifle-like manner, more than one boar would have taken

some very disagreeable liberties with my person.

I have a letter by me at this moment from an old sportsman, which tends to corroborate my assertion; and as the gallant writer is as distinguished in the jungle as in the field, he will not, I am sure, be displeased at my here giving an extract from his epistle, which was addressed to the late Mr. Manton.

After an account of his several hunting excursions, accompanied by a long list of killed, wounded, and missing, the Colonel goes on to say,—

“ It may be satisfactory to you to know that I always preferred your double-barrelled guns to any rifle piece.

“ Returning from Asseer Ghurr, in April last, at a village in a very hilly country, where it was next to impossible to kill, I learned that in the short space of four months above fifty people had

been killed by a tiger ; and while I was at breakfast, within a quarter of a mile of my camp, three of my camp bullocks at graze were destroyed.

“ I went out and saw the tiger repeatedly, but had no opportunity of a good shot. About four o’clock in the evening I again went out, and found, but lost almost immediately. In about an hour, however, I was fortunate enough to observe the monster—a fine, large male tiger—ascend the ridge of a hill. On perceiving my elephant, he instantly crouched, and I had only his forehead to fire at. The distance was eighty yards, and at an angle of about fifty degrees.

“ I stopped my elephant, and taking as good an aim as my position admitted of, I fired. The ball struck between the upper part of the nose and eye, and was so instantly fatal as not to alter the position of the animal. You, of course,

know the number of the gun ; and I can only assure you that a better cannot be had.

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ W—— C——,

“ Lt.-Col. —— Regt., Baitool.

“ To Mr. John Manton,

“ Dover-street, London.”

This letter says much in support of my argument, and I can safely assert that the gun I had with me in Brittany was equally good with the one alluded to. But I had another favourite double with me also, which, for general shooting, I almost preferred ; and this one was made by Westley Richards.

I never knew the sportsman yet who did not assert that he had the best gun that ever was fired out of, and the best dog that ever stood to covey. Contra-

diction is worse than useless in such cases ; and as I make it a point to humour every one to the top of their bent, I (to borrow an elegant expression from Lord Duberly) “ always sit mum chance,” and let the self-satisfied gentlemen expatiate *ad libitum* on the merits of their several *nonpareils*.

For fear I may be accused of falling into a similar error, I will content myself by saying that I believe I once had as good guns and as good dogs as any private gentleman in her Majesty’s dominions.

I have remarked that the top-sawyers in the gun trade charge too high a price for their first-rate doubles, but that Mr. Westley Richards is an exception. The price demanded by the Mantons, Purdey, Moore, &c., is somewhat about fifty-four pounds, and sometimes rather more. This is their *booking* charge. Now,

Mr. Bishop, of Bond-street, who is Westley Richards's agent, asks from eight-and-thirty to forty pounds, ready money. Here is a great difference in the *price*, but I can assure my readers *none* will be found in the *guns* or the *workmanship*, for both are perfect. I have shot with first-rate guns made by all the first-rate makers, but I never met with any superior to Westley Richards's, but a vast number very inferior to them.

The "Bishop of Bond-street," as this facetious agent terms himself, is unremitting in the discharge of his duty to his employer, and personally superintends and inspects the finishing of the guns. It must in justice be admitted that they are got up in a very superior manner, and I will add, that they shoot stronger and quicker than many others whose makers shall be nameless.

In short, they are turned out in the

very best style, and, for neatness and finish, are not to be surpassed, if equalled. The workmanship is perfect; and these advantages, coupled with the circumstance of Mr. Westley Richards charging some fourteen or fifteen guineas less than his competitors in the trade, have secured to the aforesaid “Bishop of Bond-street” such a flow of first-rate patronage and custom as to keep this self-created prelate in constant work.

Mr. George Wood, of Ottershaw, with whom I have the pleasure of being acquainted, patronizes the Bishop; and his keepers and himself have dealt death and destruction with Mr. Richards’s guns in the well-stocked preserves of this beautiful domain. I happened to be in Surrey two years ago, and Mr. Wood was kind enough to invite me over to Ottershaw, after his return from the Highlands.

My own guns were in Brittany, but

this was no impediment in the way of my sport, for I was provided with one of Mr. Wood's private particulars, and a splendid little gun it was—I made some surprising shots at rabbits with it, perfectly incredible to distance; and the shot were thrown with a strength and concentration I never yet saw surpassed; this in rabbit shooting is especially desirable; for with a scattering, weak-shooting gun, you have the painful reflection of dooming the animal to a lingering, torturing death.

I am perfectly disinterested in making these observations, and I can therefore honestly and conscientiously say to him who wants a good double, go to the Bishop of Bond-street, and if he do not sell you a first-rate one, I know nothing of guns.

As economy is the order of the day, it may not be irrelevant to state, that where price is an object, the sportsman of mode-



rate means may pick up an excellent gun, by a first-rate maker, at one or two respectable repositories in this metropolis.

Gentlemen's sons of the present day begin to know the value of pounds, shillings, and pence ; and many a scion of a noble house is not above purchasing a second-hand gun, when, some fifteen or twenty years ago, he would have cut his dearest friend for entertaining such a plebeian idea.

Mr. Vaughan, the silversmith in the Strand, has an exceedingly good selection of guns. I accompanied a friend of mine to this establishment not long ago, he being about to make a second-hand purchase for an acquaintance in the country. I was really surprised at the extensive and judicious assortment ; I saw some new, and a few second-hand guns, by the two Mantons, Purdey, Lancaster, Westley Richards, Forsyth, and one by

Anderson ; and they were worth looking at.

It is far from my wish or intention, in noticing these chance guns, to interfere with or diminish the sale of new ones from the fountain heads ; nor do I imagine that these observations can possibly injure the celebrated artists ; for, generally speaking, they have more work in hand at all seasons of the year than they can finish, and more orders than they can execute ; and although they may possibly view with a jealous eye such an establishment as Mr. Vaughan's, I still assume to myself the privilege of pointing out to the economist, the half-pay officer, and the sportsman of pleasing manners and small fortune, where either of these classes of my readers may hit upon an unimpeachable gun.

A diversity of opinion exists as to the merit of the back-action lock ; the advo-

cates for the innovation contending that the appearance of the gun is materially improved, and that on the new principle the locks are effectually protected from wet.

*Quant à moi*, I do not agree with these disciples of the new school, inasmuch as I do not think the construction of the back-action lock adds to the beauty of the stock—it is not half so sportsman-like in appearance as the old system ; and as to keeping out damp from the locks, if they be properly fitted, and turned out by any of the respectable firms I have mentioned, water will never find its way to the inner works on the ancient principle.

But I am prepared to shew that the back-action lock principle is defective in two essential particulars,—firstly, the stock of the gun is materially weakened,

from the circumstance of the principal hold of the lock itself being through the grasp, where it necessarily tapers off, and the long narrow plates do not make up for the diminution of strength and solidity occasioned by boring through the stock at this important point ; and, secondly, a gun mounted in this way can never shoot so sharply as on the usual plan, because, from the peculiar construction of the back-action lock, the hammer has a greater distance to travel ere it falls on the nipple, and it is consequently less quick in its operation. The locks of a gun, like wheel-horses in a mail, cannot be too near their work.

Notwithstanding the excellence of Mr. John Manton's guns, and their superior powers of carrying ball, I would earnestly recommend the boar-shooter to arm himself with a rifle ; this is decidedly the

weapon for such hazardous sport. I found the benefit of them at Rennes, on our second visit to Brittany.

The art of rifle shooting has been much practised of late years, and we can boast of some very tolerable performers. Mr. William Moore, the gun and rifle maker of the Edgeware-road, is, I believe, the first rifle-shot of the day, and has won more cups, prizes, and matches than any Englishman around ; Captain Ross is also a proficient, and Count D'Orsay likewise.

I was present at a match between the two latter, which was for a thousand guineas, and contended for about six years ago, in Mr. Purdey's shooting ground, near Notting Hill. The distance agreed upon was one hundred and fifty yards, at thirty-inch targets, without a rest. Large sums were depending upon the event, as from the Count's well-known

celebrity as a first-rate ball shot, his friends were very eager to back him.

It was understood between the contending parties that he who should put the greatest number of bullets through the target should be considered the winner. This was the private compact entered into by the competitors themselves, without reference to the established rules of target-shooting.

I have ever been taught to believe that in target shooting, the person who hits the bull's eye, and who puts the greater number of shots in and nearest to it, is considered the winner. Not so, however, in this instance ; for, according to the agreement between Captain Ross and Count D'Orsay, the former was pronounced the winner, although the latter, in my humble opinion, shot the better of the two ; as, upon inspection, the bull's eye of the Count's target presented more

perforations in and about it, than Captain Ross's.

By the stipulations it was understood that each miss was to be computed as thirty inches against the shooter. The Count unfortunately made several at starting, from over excitement: he was decidedly nervous, probably owing to the high reputation of his antagonist, and, abiding by the private arrangement, he was the loser, although, as I have before stated, he shot better in the aggregate than Captain Ross. But even this exhibition, good as the shooting may be considered in this country, would be laughed at by a North American Indian, and the Americans themselves.

I had the good fortune to be quartered in Canada some two or three-and-twenty years ago, and having, during my stay in that country, visited the States and some of the Indian tribes, I have witnessed

some extraordinary feats performed with the rifle.

I once saw an Indian chief shoot a duck through the head at a distance of eighty yards, as it was floating on Lake Huron ; and I could quote many similar instances of the wonderful precision with which this weapon is used in the back woods.

I became so fascinated by the miracles I saw accomplished by the grooved barrels, that I took to rifle-shooting myself in those days, but I never got beyond hitting a bottle once out of three times, at seventy-five or eighty yards, and that with a rest. But this is barely the *pons asinorum* amongst rifle-shooters, so I fear I did not do my master much credit.

My instructor in this useful branch of gunnery, as it is termed by our trans-Atlantic brethren, was an American—one of the most patient and kind-hearted of men ; and who, in addition to his un-



rivalled skill in the use of the rifle, was thoroughly master of the science of projectiles, and was theoretically as well as practically informed on all matters relating to the gun.

Having afforded me the benefit of his tuition and bright example during a visit to Upper Canada, he was kind enough to forward to me at Quebec the following clever paper, which I have ventured to transcribe for the benefit of my readers, to some of whom it may not prove uninteresting.

## CHAPTER VII.

### RIFLE SHOOTING, BY AN AMERICAN GENTLEMAN.

“ Kingston, Upper Canada,

“ Aug. 4th, 1819.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ As you have proved one of my best and most diligent pupils, I shall attempt to give you a few plain instructions, and make a few plain observations about the rifle, aiming only to make myself so understood, that attention to what I shall communicate will enable any one to acquire a skilful management of this

kind of gun, and many to become expert marksmen.

Few men arrive at a very great degree of perfection in rifle-shooting. The “heaven-born rifle shot” must have long muscular arms, strong hips, coolness of action, and presence of mind, keenness of eye, and command of temper, nerves unbraced by anything except exercise and spring water,\* and, added to all, constant practice.

#### OF THE RIFLE BARREL.

The rifle barrel should be of the octagon form, three feet seven inches and a half long, and weight at least five pounds. Five pounds is a very light barrel. This length is generally adopted by the best rifle makers. It gives one spiral revolu-

\* I am sorry that I cannot, in this instance, agree with my American friend—I like a dash of brandy in it.—F. T.

tion and a half to the grooves or rifles ; so that the ball, upon leaving the mouth of the gun, will have turned a time and a half on its own axis.

This completely keeps up the rotatory motion as long as the progressive motion exists, or very nearly so ; and it is the combination of these two motions which checks the aberration in the flight of the bullet, and is the cause of the superior accuracy and precision of the rifle.

Experience teaches that the number of grooves or rifles should be seven, cut exactly parallel to each other all the way down.

This number will answer for a gun carrying either an ounce ball, or a hundred and upwards to the pound. The rifles should be cut shallow ; otherwise there will be too much friction, and too much windage, both of which operate against accuracy and range.

In shallow grooves, the patch is not cut through before it leaves the gun, as is the case when they are too deep ; nor is the gun so apt to become foul.

The barrel should be heavy, to enable you to poise it steadily without a rest ; and it should be of an equal size from the breech to the muzzle. Weight and length are indispensably necessary to the rifle.

Take a light or short gun, present either at arm's length, you cannot keep it to bear on a fine object longer than a few seconds. Take one with a barrel of the weight (the lightest admissible) and length I have named, and you can keep it poised off hand without any perceptible vibration.

Besides, a heavy barrel, by reason of its additional thickness, counteracts the effect of the explosion of the charge of powder on the barrel, and prevents the vibration caused thereby communicating any effect

to the bullet as it is discharged from the gun. Weight also prevents recoil ; the least degree of which would undoubtedly change the direction of the aim, and of course the ball.

The rifle barrel should be stained a dark brown ; bright barrels reflect too much light for accurate vision, and are too easily seen by wild game. For the same reason, steel mountings are preferable to brass or silver.

As lessening the friction of the ball as it passes in contact with the barrel is one of the causes of the accuracy of the rifle, great care should be taken that the barrel be bored perfectly smooth, and free from flaws. It should be so equally bored that, in loading, the bullet should fit tight all the way down, and not become looser as it approaches the powder.

To enable you to examine the inside of the barrel, take a piece of looking-glass,

and draw with it the sun's rays to a focus on the touch-hole ; look down the muzzle at the same time, and you may detect the smallest flaw or inequality.

#### OF THE RIFLE SIGHTS.

This is of the greatest importance. If not accurate, or the sights of a rifle by accident get out of order, the rifle is absolutely good for nothing till they are regulated. The upper surface of the barrel should be so fashioned as to admit the sights being made low without the breech interfering with the eye when taking sight.

The fore sight should be made of the best silver, six-eighths of an inch long, thick on the top, soldered to a brass-plate, and dove-tailed into the barrel ; the lower end of the sight, two inches from the muzzle, and made to fit tight exactly

in the middle of the upper surface of the barrel.

A fore-sight made altogether of ivory is preferable to any other, as it never glares. The hind-sight should be of iron or steel, browned or blued, *never bright*; the notch shallow, as fine as possible, scarcely wider than a hair, and coming to a point at the bottom.

Both sights should be made as low as the line of sight along the barrel will permit, without being interrupted by the breech.

The hind-sight should also be dovetailed into the upper octagon of the barrel, about twelve inches from the breech; though it is evident that the further the sights are apart, the less the angle of variation will be.

But fashion and convenience must be consulted a little, as you can shoot



quicker with the hind-sight twelve inches from the breech, and the eye is better pleased, as it looks better. Where the notch is made, the sight should be made thin, by cutting out a piece. It should be fitted too tight to be moved with the fingers, requiring a smart blow with a small hammer to move it.

Now, should you find after repeated trials, at different distances, with a rest, that your gun shoots too low, you must, with a dull file, cut the fore-sight down a little, being extremely cautious to cut scarcely a hair's breadth, till you make other trials. Should the fore-sight be so low as not to bear cutting sufficiently, you must have another hind-sight made a little higher.

It is inconceivable to a person ignorant of rifle shooting what a slight difference in the height of the sights will make a considerable difference in the

shooting. If your gun shoot too high, cut down, by very slow degrees, your hind-sight.

The greatest caution must be used in cutting down the sights ; if you cut the least too much, new sights will have to be made. Thus it will be seen that a high fore-sight causes the gun to shoot *low*, and a high hind-sight makes it shoot *high* ; because the higher the fore-sight, the more you must depress the muzzle and elevate the breech ; and the higher the hind-sight, the more you must elevate the muzzle and depress the breech. If the gun shoot too much to the *right*, knock the hind sight very little to the left. When the hind sight is to the left, you must incline the muzzle that way to catch the range of the sights : thus it will shoot to the *left*. If the gun shoot too much to the left, knock the hind sight to the right.

Although the sights be only the sixteenth of an inch out of the true line, it will, in the distance of a hundred yards, cause an aberration of four inches and seven-tenths. A good rifle shoots a ball for a hundred yards in a straight line, point it as you will.

Lay down a straight line a hundred yards in length ; then lay down another of the same length, beginning at the same point, and let it pass through a point four feet distant from the beginning, and one sixteenth of an inch from the second point, you will find this second line to be constantly diverging from the first ; and at the end of one hundred yards, will be distant from the first, four inches and seven-tenths.

Suppose the rifle barrel four feet long, and the hind-sight one-sixteenth part of an inch too much to the right or left ; then, if four feet, or forty-eight inches,

err one-sixteenth part of an inch, one hundred yards, or thirty-six hundred inches, will err 4.7 of an inch, or four inches and three quarters. Then multiply 4.7 of an inch by the sixteenth of an inch, and it gives 72.2, which shews that, at the end of one hundred yards, the original error has increased upwards of seventy-five times.

This will at once convince you of the extraordinary deviation of a rifle bullet when the sights are but the sixteenth part of an inch out of the true line. This is but one of the errors. Moving the gun in pulling the trigger would also increase it in precisely the same way. The practical part of all this is familiar to the western hunter, but not to the rifle smith, as no rifle shoots true when first taken from the shops.

In shooting, exposed to the sun, there is sometimes such a glare that you can-

not take good sight; this may be prevented by having a tin shade, about four inches long, made to fit on the barrel, over the hind sight, and high enough to see the object to be shot at, under it, at a distance. It should be in the shape of a section of the barrel, slit longitudinally. When the sights are properly regulated, mark them.

#### OF THE BREECH.

The rifle should be single breeched. Though not so convenient to take the barrel out of the stock for the purpose of washing, yet, as it is attached to the stock by the breech screw, it lies more secure, and is not liable to be placed in a different situation when put back into the stock, which might cause an alteration in the shooting.

The common patent breech, or the pear chamber, as we call it, would increase the power of the gun, by the powder acting immediately on the centre of the ball;

but then the chamber must not be more than filled with powder.

I prefer the common single breech, with the patent chamber, on the percussion principle. From the strength of percussion locks, and the suddenness of the explosion, it might be presumed that some depression in the gun would take place ; but I have known one used with great success by an experienced hunter in the West, who gave it the preference over the flint.\* By the percussion plan, the explosion is so quick, that there is, in fact, less chance of a deviation in the line of fire before the ball leaves the gun.

#### OF THE STOCK.

The half stock of curled maple, walnut, or other handsome and variegated wood, extending about one-third up the barrel ;

\* The reader must bear in mind that this paper was written very shortly after the adoption of that invaluable invention, the percussion principle.

the barrel ribbed, but made in the German fashion ; silver escutcheons, thumb-piece, star, &c. ; steel mountings, of the usual rifle fashion, I think handsomest. This, however, is a matter of taste, in which any one can please himself.

I once saw a rifle, made at Harper's Ferry, in our States, by order of the then Secretary-at-War, for an Indian chief, who had distinguished himself at the battle of the Horse-shoe. It was a splendid piece of workmanship. Instead of the scroll guard, a limb which grew out of the main stock, just below where the right hand grasps the breech, was fashioned to resemble the butt-end of a pistol, handsomely chequered and capped with silver. This enabled you to grasp the gun with strength and steadiness, and had a very handsome appearance. I thought it an improvement.

The thimbles for the ramrod should be

made large, to hold a strong stout ram-rod. The screw should be made long, to give a good hand-hold in wiping. After much experience, I give a decided preference to the double triggers, with a set screw to regulate them, and a flier in the lock.

#### OF THE CHARGE.

I have never found any difference in the charge of powder, except that an increased quantity increased the range of the ball. I usually shoot at small objects, a short distance, with half a charge of powder ; but find it makes no sort of difference in firing at them a double charge, intended to break the bones of a deer, at a long distance. Dupont's canister powder,\* with the blue label and two stars, I prefer to any other for cleanliness and quick firing.

\* The American gunpowder may be very good, but I think Pigou's, or Curtis and Harvey's, would be found equal to it.



There is an unglazed, soft kind of powder, manufactured among the mountains, very proper for rifles. Owing to its softness, the patch carries down all the dirt every time you load. The charcoal employed in making this powder is prepared from hemp stocks ; but soft powder does not keep well.

#### OF THE BALL.

I prefer a rifle that carries not more than sixty to the pound. If smaller, they easier get foul, and are much more difficult to clean, neither can they be much depended upon for long distance. The ball should not be perfectly spherical ; it should be a little oblong ; and the neck should be cut off flat, which should always be put downwards. This configuration keeps the ball from rolling over, or changing ends in its flight, and preserves the rotatory motion on its own axis.

The moulds should be made stout and heavy, (to prevent, as much as possible, their heating when casting balls) without shears or cutters at the rivet, to cut off the necks of the bullets, as they loosen the rivets, and injure the shape of the balls.. The mould should be made flat on the top, and the top flush with the handles. There should be an iron plate on top, (a quarter of an inch thick) and made to turn on a small rivet or screw.

To the plate is connected a lever, about two inches long, with a feather-spring attached, to keep the plate in its place. This plate should have a hole in it, bored larger at top than at bottom, so as to leave a sharp edge. The lead is poured through this hole in the plate, into the moulds. A smart blow is given with the end of the lever, against anything capable of bearing resistance.

The plate is thus moved far enough to

cut off the neck, and the spring immediately forces it back in its proper position, ready for another bullet. In loading, always push the ball home to the powder. This may be told by the ramrod rebounding. Should there be any vacancy, there is some danger in shooting the gun.

#### OF THE WRAPPER, OR PATCH.

For this purpose common parchment has been recommended. I have never seen it tried. I cannot think it good, and it is out of the reach of riflemen generally, at least in our country. If put in dry, I am sure it will not accommodate itself to the shape of the ball, and fill up the grooves; and if wetted, it must be fired off immediately, or it will become dry, and as hard as a horn.

The best quality of flannel is the best material for this purpose I have ever tried; it unites suppleness with consist-

ence, carries down all dirt, fills up the rifles so as to prevent the escape of any flame, and neither burns nor cuts. I recommend all riflemen to give it a trial. Prime before you load,\* and never pick the touch-hole after loading, unless your gun flash, and do not even then mash in any powder. After a flash, clean the touch-hole, by introducing the picker or feather, and shake in fine powder.

The Indians, when in action, to load quick, dispense with the patch ; but they chew the balls a little, to give the rotatory motion. When the rifle is clean, grease the under side of the patch ; when foul, wet it in your mouth.

#### CLEANING THE RIFLE.

When very foul, take the barrel out of the stock, and wash it with hot water

\* The copper cap and nipple were not known in America when this paper was written.

and soap. As a gun-barrel has no temper, or is as soft as the iron can be made, you need not fear to injure it by hot water. If not very foul, stop the touch-hole with a feather and pour two teaspoonsful of strong vinegar in the barrel. The nitre of the powder will cause the vinegar to effervesce to the top, and loosen all the filth. Wipe out with good soft tow. Then take a piece of tow, rolled loosely into the size and length of a quill; twist one end fine, and insert it in the touch-hole; let the rod and screw down the muzzle; get hold of the tow, and gradually twist it all through the touch-hole. This will clean it thoroughly.

Never squib off a little powder after cleaning your gun. If it be perfectly dry, there can be no use in it; and if not, it makes it dirty before you begin to use it. When you put by your rifle for any length of time, never put it away clean, except

the locks ; the smoke of the powder in the barrel is the best preventive against rust. Stop the muzzle with rag, tow, or cork ; wash out before you use the gun again. The screw should be made long, as observed before, to give a good handhold in wiping out. Never twist the tow on the screw when wiping ; lay it on the muzzle, give the screw a gentle twist in it, and push it down.

Should your gun get choked in wiping, pour in a little hot water. If, in loading, it get choked, and the ball remain fast, and you cannot force it down in the usual way, let one person steady the gun with the butt-end on the ground ; then hold the ramrod stiff with both your hands, one near the muzzle, the other near the end ; let a third person strike the ramrod with a piece of wood ; the ball will then go down without mashing or bruising. Never ram the bullet too much ; it com-

presses the powder, excludes the air, and prevents a simultaneous ignition of the powder. The ramrod sometimes swells too big for the thimbles, and cannot easily be drawn.

Take the gun between your knees, the butt on the ground, and the barrel towards your face ; place both hands on the ramrod, and push upwards, holding and compressing the gun between your knees at the same time. If it cannot be drawn in this way, knot a silk handkerchief or strong string several times round the end of the ramrod ; wrap the ends round your hands and pull, while another holds your gun. Never put your ramrod in the joint of a door, or use pincers or bullet-mould to pull it out ; these ways mash and injure the rod ; the way I have recommended will always succeed.

COMPARATIVE RANGE OF THE RIFLE  
AND SMOOTH GUN.

Against all authority I maintain that a rifle shoots a ball further than a smooth gun. Take a rifle of the length and weight I have mentioned, which carries sixty balls to the pound; put in a full charge of powder, so that you may see where the ball strikes; then take a smooth gun of exactly the same calibre, sixty balls to the pound, and of any length; fire it, and see which throws the ball farthest. This I have frequently tried, and the result has been uniformly in favour of the rifle.

When I hear gentlemen say that a smooth gun shoots a ball farthest, I have ever found, upon inquiry, that the experiment was made either with a musket or large ducking-gun, and a rifle carrying sixty, eighty, or a hundred to the pound.



Now this proves nothing, as we well know that the range is in proportion to the diameter of the ball, other things being equal,—such as the powder, quality of the guns, and so on.

Thus, sir, I have given in my experience. Should it aid in directing the attention of gentlemen to this healthful and delightful sport, I shall be exceedingly gratified at having lent my instrumentality. Perhaps I may one day spring a trigger on your race-course at Quebec myself, where, if you can find a man who can hit the size of a dollar, one hundred yards, with a rest ; the size of a twenty-five cent piece, fifty yards, without a rest ; and a ten cent piece, thirty yards, without a rest,—you may confidently pronounce ‘that man is not so easily beaten,’ and you may bet him against the field, two to one.

Yet I have known shooting superior to

this : in fact, I have seen such exploits done with the rifle, that they would not be believed in any country where that arm was not in exclusive use, and the smooth bore looked upon with ineffable contempt.

I have the honour to remain,

Dear Sir,

Your very obedient and obliged friend,

S—— S——.

To F. Tolfrey, Esq., Quebec.

I give this letter verbatim as I received it from the writer ; and, making due allowance for national idiom and peculiarity of style, I think my readers will admit that it contains a great deal of sound, practical information.

If my little work should perchance be taken up by one or more of our crack gun-makers, they may benefit by a perusal of this paper, albeit from the pen of an

American, for they may be tempted to exercise their ingenuity and talents in the art and mystery of rifle-making. Such a weapon as described by my transatlantic correspondent would be invaluable in the Highlands, for deer stalking.

Mr. Moore, of the Edgeware-road, is the only one of the trade who has exclusively devoted his attention to this branch of his vocation ; he has made it his study, and has turned out some first-rate rifles. For boar-shooting they are indispensable ; and whether the sportsman pursue the wild hog in Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, or on the burning plains of Hindostan, he should never be without a rifle. Were I to undertake another crusade against the *sangliers*, I am not sure that I should not provide myself with a *double-barrelled* rifle ; for a second bullet at command would, in many instances, prevent much mischief.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Good regulation in France, in restricting the shooting—The opening day regulated by the harvest—Game-laws—Our Game-laws, and a few observations on the game-bill—No grouse in France—Remarks on grouse-shooting—How to pack birds intended for presents—Sporting on the moors—Training recommended—A dog made a companion—Patent safety-guard—Accident mentioned.

THERE is one salutary regulation in France, which is invariably and strictly enforced throughout the country, and which, by the way, I could wish to see followed in our own bird counties — and that is, the mayors of communes and districts being empowered to postpone the

opening day of the shooting season, in the event of a backward harvest.

It is a judicious enactment, and well worthy of imitation. The first of September is a *dies non*, provided the grain be not housed ; and I have known, in some *Departements*, the *chasse* to be interdicted until the 10th, 12th, and even the 15th of the month. The birds, too, are none the worse for being a fortnight older ; and I am convinced that if grouse-shooting with us were not permitted until the end of August, it would be of more real benefit to the sportsman than as the law now exists.

The penalty of shooting in France before the period officially announced by the mayor of the town, village, or district, is very severe—fine and imprisonment, in a greater or lesser degree, according to the enormity of the offence, and the character of the offender. If he be a notorious

poacher, the confiscation of the gun is superadded to the punishment.

Where the landed proprietors are wealthy, and their domains large, the estate is well preserved, as a good establishment of *gardes de chasse* is kept up; and these functionaries, with very few exceptions, perform their duty zealously and faithfully. Where the revenue of the Seigneur will not admit of this outlay, depredations on his manor are but of too frequent occurrence; for almost every Frenchman carries a gun, and he will pop at the partridges whenever he can;—whether he kills them or not, is of little moment.

The French *Deputés* do not trouble their political brains about game-laws; for, with the exception of a royal *ordonnance*, which compels every sporting subject to take out a *porte d'armes*, at the rate of twelve-and-sixpence a head, there is no

further opposition to frightening the game in *la belle France*—barring always, as the Irishman says, in the few instances of the wealthy Seigneurs, who may be *selfish* enough to preserve the game on their estates, for their own amusement and for their table.

Our own House of Commons, however, has given us a bill—but then, such a bill ! A greater curse surely was never inflicted upon us *poor sons of guns*, who delight in pulling a trigger. If this said Game Bill is not revised (I had almost written rescinded), in five years hence we shall not have a bird left to fire at.

I would ask, has this celebrated bill effected the purpose for which it was enacted ? namely,—the annihilation of poaching. Has it not, on the contrary, materially assisted the poacher in carrying on his nefarious traffic, by affording him an open market for his spoil ? No

doubt the selling of game is extremely convenient to certain landed proprietors, and by such needy gentlemen the present game-laws are viewed with indifference; for so long as they can covertly supply Leadenhall market, they will tacitly lend their aid to uphold this unsportsmanlike legislative enactment.

Let any person, sportsman or not, examine the greater part of the game exposed for sale in the shops of this metropolis, he will then find that nine birds out of ten, and hares in the same ratio, have not fallen by the gun. Not the mark of a shot will he discover—for he will perceive that the birds have been netted, and the hares snared.

It is notorious that the poachers adopt these methods of taking game; and game so taken, being comparatively uninjured, the poulterer will give a higher price for, because the birds do not spoil so soon



as when killed by the gun ; so that this far-famed act, instead of counteracting the system of poaching, affords it every facility, and, in point of fact, encourages it ; and it is an undeniable and indisputable fact, that poaching has increased in a frightful degree since the act has passed.

The most barbarous and cruel murders are of daily and nightly occurrence, and our jails are crowded with the heartless miscreants who stop not at the shedding of human blood in pursuing their unlawful depredations.

Those overwhelming pests, the railroads, furnish their *quota* of reckless vagabonds ; for the navigators employed in these devastating works, sally forth by night, in gangs, and destroy the game by wholesale. Resistance is useless, as the farmers and smaller landed proprietors can tell, and their preserves are

thinned, without the power of obtaining redress.

I am surprised, and I deeply regret, that the subject has not been taken up by some patriotic member. We have many sportsmen in the house, to whom, it is reasonable to suppose, the affair must be of some importance; and yet, session after session passes over without any notice being taken of this “protection for poachers,” as I have heard the bill called.

The object for which I have ventured to obtrude these pages on the notice of my brother sportsmen will not admit of my taking this bill to pieces; but I could shew up the absurdities and incongruities with which it abounds; and would also dissect the several sections, and expose the whole arrangement, by placing it in its true light, for the benefit of all well-wishers to the trigger. But I dare not trespass on the patience of my readers,

by plunging into an elaborate examination of this mischievous act.

I can find no term more applicable, for it strikes at the root of an Englishman's first and noblest amusement, and tends to deprive the sportsman of his pastime, and the honest landed proprietor of his game. I cannot, for a moment, believe that the bill will be allowed to remain as it is, and I would fain hope that a spark of *amor patriæ* still kindles in the bosoms of our legislators, and that some change will speedily be effected.

But *revenons à nos moutons*, as we say at Dunkirk. It is somewhat strange that the grouse are not to be found in France—at least, I never met with any. During my stay at Quimper, Mr. W—— and myself explored the country for miles around, in the hope of meeting with the heath bird on the *bruyères* which are to be met with all over Brittany—but not a

feather did we find ; and yet, finer moors are not to be seen in Scotland, Yorkshire, or Wales.

I have observed that much good would result if grouse-shooting, in this country, were not permitted until the end of the month of August, and I think it would be well if the proprietors of the several hills would come to a determination, *una voce*, to defer the opening day to a later period—a fortnight at least ; and I will take the liberty of stating why I recommend the adoption.

In the early part of the month, during the very hot weather, the young birds lie like so many stones ; the old birds rise first, and, of course, the chances are equal that the hen bird is knocked over. The mischief here done is incalculable, for, as in the case of pheasants, where the hen-birds are destroyed, the numbers in each succeeding year must be sensibly diminished. By the exercise of a fortnight's

patience this evil would be remedied, for the young birds would not only be stronger on the wing, but, being wilder also, would take flight with the old ones, and thus afford a chance, at least, to the hens.

While I am on this subject, I may here mention another besetting sin, which cries loudly for reform, and that is, the manner in which grouse are forwarded as presents to the friends of the sportsman : no care whatever is taken in packing them up, and as little in the shooting of them. The greater part of the birds that drop to the gun in the month of August are the young ones, and generally at such short distances, in consequence of the over-anxiety of the shooter, that they are blown to ribbons. In this state they are crammed into a close pocket, or a game-bag, and, when shaken out, are usually a mass of putridity. This accounts for the many *living cargoes* imported into this country from the Highlands.

I do not say that this is universally the case, for a good sportsman will allow his bird, young or old, to attain a certain distance before he fires ; but the novice is too eager to behave with this requisite coolness.

A friend of mine, a very good shot too, offends sadly in this particular, and bangs away, right and left, as soon as the birds rise. I was down with him in Yorkshire not many seasons ago, on a very good range of hills, and he bagged from thirty to forty brace every day ; but, from the failing I have alluded to, he seldom brought home more than three brace of birds that were presentable. Some of the younger ones were blown literally to atoms, and were fit for nothing but pies or soup—roasting them was out of the question, for they would scarcely hang together.

Instead of ramming the game into the bag *en masse*, I would recommend the

birds being tied by the heels and slung separately on the waist-belt of the follower or attendant ; by adopting this simple plan, they will be kept sweet, and will not taint.

Where the grouse are found in the hollows, and the soil is boggy, and when they fall into puddles or swampy ground when shot, they should be carefully wiped dry with a towel or cloth. This applies to all kinds of birds, but more especially to snipe.

Half of the snipes which are killed fall into water, and in their wet state are poked into a game-bag or pocket: the consequence is, that in a few hours they become a mass of carrion. The delicate long bill should be swung backwards and forwards until the moisture is shaken off, then wiped quite dry, and hung by the legs to the strap round the attendant's waist.

On arriving at home, they should be hung in a dry place ; or if any of these dainty birds be intended for a present, and are to be sent to any distance, the following recipe will be found an excellent preservative :—

When the snipes are thoroughly dry, insinuate a corn of allspice, or whole pepper, in the cavity of each eye (previously scooped out), one in the bill, and another in the vent ; sprinkle them with fine pepper under the wings and feathers—they should then be rolled up separately in nettles, or fine paper, and they will keep, however closely packed, for a long time. Every bird of game, in fact, is the better for this precaution, and the satisfaction that must accrue to the receiver, as well as the donor, will amply repay the additional pains bestowed upon the preservation of the gift.

Grouse-shooting differs materially from



partridge, or, as it is commonly termed, bird-shooting. It will be found in vain to *enjoy* this sport without previous training ; the fatigue attendant upon grouse-shooting is inconceivable to the uninitiated, and unless the amateur exercise himself (and his quadruped also) *à la Barclay* for some time previously to the opening day, he will meet with disappointment.

I would, with submission, recommend all enthusiasts to take a constitutional walk before breakfast every morning, on hilly ground, as near the scene of action as possible, for three weeks at least before the 12th. He will get himself and his dogs into wind, and both will be benefited by a knowledge of the surrounding country.

Many of my acquaintances who call themselves sportsmen, and who remain in town until the close of the season,—I mean the London fashionable season,—never see their dogs until a few hours

before their services are required in the field. How, let me ask, can any reciprocity of good feeling, or even understanding, exist between them ? and without this it is next to impossible to command success.

A really good sportsman, and one who thoroughly understands his business, will make a friend and companion of his dog ; a feeling of self-interest alone, should no other exist, ought to dictate the policy of keeping up a good understanding between master and dog. I speak from experience and observation.

I remember some two years ago, when on a particular moor in Yorkshire, falling in with a gentleman well known at the west end of this demoralized metropolis, exceedingly well *got up* as to his turnout, armed with a new double by Purdey, and accompanied by a superlatively handsome setter.

My London friend happened unfortu-

nately to be surrounded by sportsmen, and as no intimacy existed between himself and his quadruped, he did little or no execution. The dog, not being familiarized to his master's voice, was frequently all abroad ; the whistle was equally useless ; and as I happened to be the nearest shooter to the well-dressed Tyro, his dog was repeatedly running up to me, which proceeding called forth curses both loud and deep from his exasperated master ; and yet I have no doubt the gentleman never imagined that he, by wilful negligence, had brought all the disasters on himself.

It is a mistaken notion that too many guns spoil the sport. I am prepared to prove that the more sportsmen there are (in moderation), on a given number of thousand acres, the better will be their chance of success ; for this simple reason—*that they drive the birds to one another.*

I need only mention, in corroboration of this assertion, that a friend of mine, an excellent sportsman, had permission to shoot over a private manor, not far from the moor where I was enjoying my sport in Yorkshire. He told me there was no lack of birds, but they were unusually wild, and although he was accompanied by first-rate dogs, he seldom got within shot of them.

After two blank days, or nearly so, he crossed the country to the position I had taken up ; he was rather staggered at first, on encountering so many guns, but found out, to his surprise, that the numbers did good instead of harm, furthered his sport, and materially assisted each other. Only one of the sportsmen, besides my friend and myself, was able to bear up against the heat and fatigue. But how was this brought about?—by the severe training we had imposed on

ourselves, we were in excellent working condition, as well as our dogs.

Grouse-shooters are of course aware that flags are planted on the ridges of the hills, or any eminences, to point out where the springs are, in order that the sportsmen and dogs may enjoy the necessary refreshment. Many were the unhappy objects I beheld on the day I am recording, who were dead beat before twelve o'clock, and the dogs were in an equally deplorable plight with their owners : even the few who were resolute enough to persevere after their temporary rest, did little more than frighten a pack or two of grouse ; for the dogs, from the want of common foresight and precaution, not having been exercised, were fairly knocked up, and could not be prevailed upon to leave the heels of their masters, in spite of all the “ damns,” “ hold ups,” and “ hie away, Carlos !”

bellowed voiciferously by the owners. All the rating, kicking, and swearing, were of no avail, and nothing was effected, save disturbing the birds.

My friend from St. James's cut but a sorry figure, and he was not a little mortified at the manifest advantage we maintained during that and every succeeding day of our sojourn on the hills. He was by no means an unentertaining companion, and had a tolerable smattering of Shakspeare into the bargain ; ever and anon indulging in a quotation, and was more than once heard to " curse the fate that gave him to the *Moor*."

While treating of grouse-shooting, I cannot refrain from recommending the universal adoption of the new patent safety-guard. In the long heather it must be found pre-eminently useful ; and I am convinced, for young beginners, it will be the means of saving many lives. All

nervous persons, and those who are easily excited and liable to be put off their guard, should never use a gun without this valuable appendage.

It may appear strange, after so strongly advocating the system, to state that I do not use it. From constant habit, and never losing sight of the caution and coolness that a really good sportsman should be master of, I do not require it; nevertheless, I repeat, that young and old should be provided with this decided improvement, and the additional expense is too trifling to be put into the scale against this life-preserver; it is a clever and simple invention, which will be the means of preventing anything in the shape of an accident, by all who may adopt it.

Unlike all other guards, it effectually bolts the lock, without interfering with the usual mode of firing. When I men-

tion the name of the ingenious inventor, Mr. Lang, of the Haymarket, I need add but little in the way of recommendation ; I, however, earnestly advise all exciteable people to use it.

There is one other caution I would give my readers, and that is, in driving to, or from, the shooting ground in a buggy, to take the caps off the nipple before slinging the gun on the dash iron. A gentleman with whom I have a slight acquaintance met with an accident of rather a serious nature, from having placed his gun in the slings commonly used for the reception of his umbrella, inside the dash-board of his buggy. The gun was not cocked, nor even half-cocked, but the hammer was down on the cap.

It is well known that good caps are so easily exploded, that the slightest pressure will fire them. It was so in this instance ;



for, in placing the gun in the position I have mentioned, it met with some trifling resistance and went off, and severely injured him. But return we to La Belle France.

## CHAPTER IX.

Abbeville — Duck - shooting — St. Valery - sur - Somme—Huts in the marshes—English gunpowder—Curtis and Harvey's—Pigou and Co.'s—Miles Peter Andrews—Quimper—*Garde champetre*—Caen—Rencontre with a *garde de chasse*—Curing his dog—How to plaster the eyes and mouth—Whisperers, and a Brittany *sorcier*.

It is possible that the promising description I have given of the wild-fowl shooting in the Bay of St. Valery-sur-Somme, as well as at Abbeville, may tempt the duck-shooter to run over for a few days in the depth of winter ; if he should, he will find a duck-gun an incumbrance ; a

good double, of fourteen bore, will answer every purpose. Every kind of wild-fowl are in such numbers, that shots at forty or fifty yards are to be had as fast as the sportsman can load. The marshes at Abbeville are dotted with huts in the winter, in which the fowlers ensconce themselves during the night; they are both air and water-tight; and by the help of straw, blankets, great coats, and a bottle of Cognac *cum* cigars, the enthusiastic amateur may contrive to keep the cold out. I have on more than one occasion deserted my virtuous bed, and indulged in a little horizontal shooting with my friend Isidore Lefort on a moon-light night. On these occasions the duck-gun is indispensable; but the unambitious duck-shooter will find quite enough employment during the day to satisfy any reasonable being without breaking in upon his slumbers by packing himself

up in straw in a turf hut, in the middle of a treacherous swamp.

English gunpowder is one of the strictly prohibited articles at the French ports, and great care and ingenuity must be exercised to escape the vigilance of the prying *douanniers*. To the bold adventurous man, as Miss Laurelia Durable says, the experiment is worth hazarding, for I am positive that our powder shoots stronger than the French, and it does not foul so much as theirs. I have smuggled several pounds of it in my time within the double lining to my trunk, and it is the best plan I can hit upon for doing a bit of contraband.

Of all our own manufacturers at home I prefer Curtis and Harvey's: I think it the strongest, and it is decidedly more equable in the grain. Pigou's ranks next in my estimation. The firm of Pigou, Andrews, and Wilks has been established

for many years, and the original partners have amassed colossal fortunes. Some of my readers will doubtless remember Mr. Miles Peter Andrews when he was in the zenith of his popularity. His literary talents and convivial qualities gained for him a host of friends and admirers. At one period of his life, he wrote for the stage, but, in spite of the excellence of his gunpowder, his *pieces never went off*.

The merit of the compositions was undeniable, but he lacked the tact, so essential to a dramatic author, of working up his productions so as to make them act, as well as read, well. In fact, they did not tell upon the stage, and consequently his comedies and farces were, with one exception, mercilessly d——d.

The one exception is deserving notice. It was remarked on the occasion, in the *Morning Post*, that a comedy had been

produced the preceding evening, written by Mr. Miles Peter Andrews, and that it had proved completely successful, and was, moreover, replete with wit and novelty. This remark gave rise to the following squib :—

“ Andrews, 'tis said, a comedy has writ  
 Replete throughout with novelty and wit;  
 If there be *wit*, to both I will agree,  
 For wit from Andrews *must* be *novelty*.”

This was severe, and certainly undeserved, for, barring his misconception of stage effect, his writings betray a depth of information, and an unusual knowledge of mankind : but his conversational powers were of the highest order also, for a more intellectual or entertaining companion, either as guest or host, never graced a festive board.

Mr. Andrews died in 1814, and it will be remembered that, in this year, several of the crowned heads of Europe honoured

England with their presence, and that a grand national fête took place, to celebrate the event, in our parks.

It so happened that a combustible building, called the Temple of Concord, was erected in the Green park, immediately opposite the back of Mr. Andrews's residence in Cleveland Row ; and from this temple a magnificent display of fireworks was to take place on the night of the jubilee.

On this day of rejoicing, poor Mr. Andrews breathed his last, and to record the melancholy event the following *jeu d'esprit* was penned :—

“ Miles Peter long by gunpowder had thrived,  
And though the peace was made, he yet survived ;  
But when the follies of the park he spied,—  
Was powder made for *this* ? he said—and died !”

But it is time to return to Quimper and our sport. The kind and hospitable inhabitants of this delightful town left

us but little time during the winter to devote to out-of-door amusements ; for the days were so short, and their hour of dining so early, that we could seldom spare more than two or three hours to the marshes in the morning. The snipe, however, were in great abundance, and so were the woodcocks.

As the spring advanced, we committed greater havoc amongst the long-bills ; in fact, the marshes were never deserted at any period of the year.

We never saw anything of the officious *garde champêtre* whom I had treated to a trot of three leagues and a half to the gates of Quimper, although we heard of him from the *gardes de chasse*, who by desire of their masters waited upon us to shew us the best shooting on their several *terres*. They appeared to enjoy the trick I had played him, and gave us to understand that he was heartily ashamed



of himself for having annoyed me in so unwarrantable a manner.

This was the only case of meddling interruption I met with in Brittany—I might almost say in France. Whenever I have accidentally encroached upon any land where the prohibitory announcement of “*chasse réservée*” has met my eye, I have invariably sought the owner of the property or his *garde de chasse*. If this functionary has perchance popped upon me before my honest intentions have been carried into execution, I have generally found a trifling *douceur* smooth all difficulties.

Some five-and-twenty years ago, the inhabitants, generally speaking, may not have been quite so civil as in the present day; but they were at that period smarting under recent defeat; and they would, when occasion offered, vent their spleen on our countrymen; but, even then, such instances were rare.

Towards the latter end of the year 1815, I ran down to Caen from Paris, in compliance with an invitation from some old and valued friends of my family, who had taken up their abode in this ancient Norman town.

I look back, even at this distant period, with no little pleasure, to the happy days I passed within its walls. Even a quarter of a century has not weakened the ties of friendship, the foundation of which was laid there, and time can never obliterate from my mind the unalloyed happiness I enjoyed in the society I had the good fortune to be introduced to.

There are certain epochs in our lives that remain indelibly stamped on the memory, which years can never efface. My visit to Caen is one of these stereotyped impressions—Shall I say for why?

Here it was that I formed an acquaintance which ripened into intimacy, and grew to friendship; and so long as the

heart beats within my breast, will it hold in affectionate remembrance the name of “Archer Croft.”

To whom could I with more propriety convey the feeble tribute of esteem, of dedicating these unpretending pages, than the companion of my youth, whose unvarying friendship and valuable counsel have supported and cheered me as my worldly prospects darkened?

He will, I trust, pardon me for recording these proofs of his unceasing esteem and regard. I have equal pride and satisfaction in making them known; for although such a rare instance of uniform kindness must redound to his credit, I feel not the less flattered in being the object of his disinterested good-will.

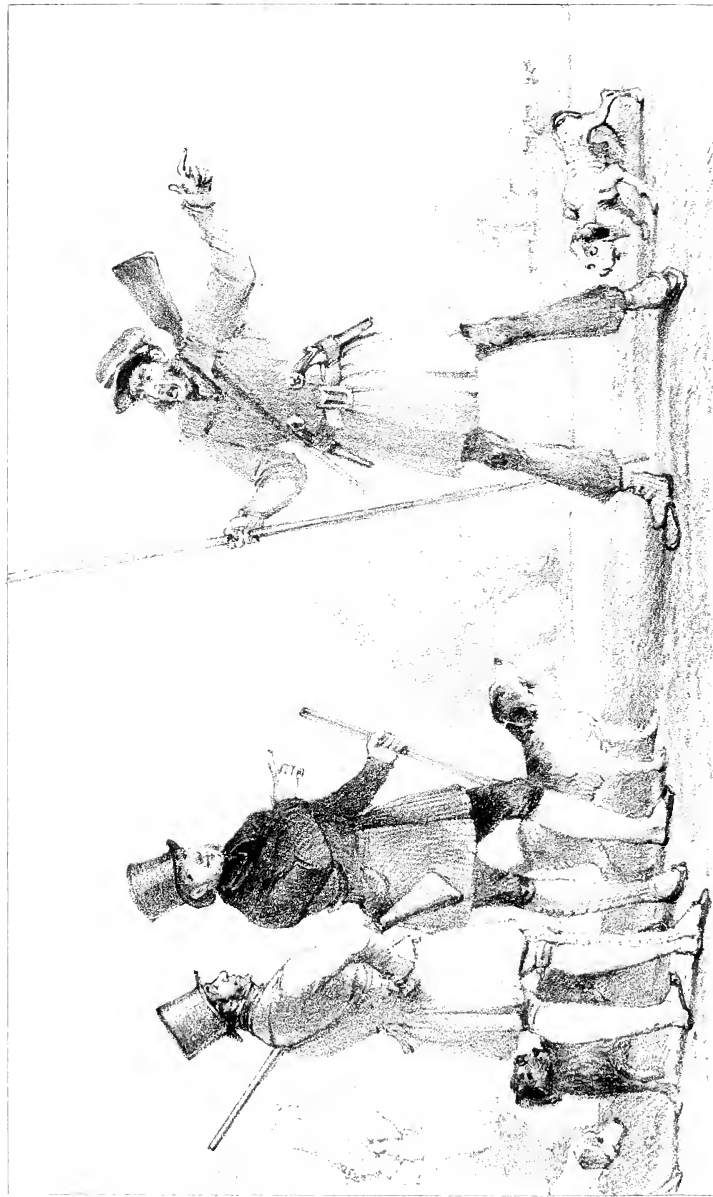
The Court of Chancery is a crucible that tries the *metal* as well as the real feelings of relatives and acquaintances; and few, very few of the latter, will stand

the test like my sterling friend. There are not many "Archer Crofts" now-a-days.

The meadows and marshes between the city of Caen and the sea abound with snipe; and as Mr. Croft and myself were enthusiastically fond of this description of shooting, we were oftener to be found in the swamp than our own homes.

It came to pass that on a certain day, and being in the meadows, my companion, not having the fear of a *procès verbal* before his eyes, incontinently invaded the sacred precincts of a neighbouring wood. We had not long trespassed on (as we afterwards learned) the forbidden ground, ere we saw a tall, lanky, hairy-faced, lanthorn-jawed *garde de chasse* making towards us with rapid strides, and apparently in about as amiable a humour as a rabid bull. He was armed to the teeth, his double-barrelled gun being





P. J. Hennebert

Paraphrasing Lohr to the Queen

THE AUTHOR & HIS FRIEND WARNED OFF BY THE SAVAGE GARDE DE CHASSE.

slung across his shoulders, and moreover (to use the words of a popular and soul-subduing ditty, under the attractive title of “ Tow, row, row, ”)

“ A brace of pistols in his belt,  
For to shoot the man wot—”

dared to set his foot in his master’s *bois* without leave.

This ogre in appearance, to assist him in his flight across the ditches, carried a huge leaping-pole, some twelve feet in length. He approached us at a pace that set at nought any attempt on our part to escape, albeit we were provided with younger legs. He was altogether the most formidable looking fellow I ever beheld.

On coming up to us, we were assailed by such a lengthened vocabulary of French oaths, that, if translated, would dumb-found all the fish-fags in Billingsgate.

All these elegant vituperations were listened to with perfect composure ; and the silence we imposed upon ourselves was only broken by the jingling of certain forty-sous pieces in the breeches-pocket of my friend Mr. Croft, the musical chink of which seemed as if by magic to soften the brute ; for by degrees his savage looks and gestures mellowed down, and his countenance began to assume an amiable expression ; whilst his eyes twinkled at the silvery sound.

Without noticing his wrathful address, we expressed the deepest interest in a wretched looking dog which had accompanied the exasperated keeper ; for the poor animal appeared to be lingering in the last and worst stage of the distemper. We had no sooner offered our condolence than the fellow said, “ *Je donnerais bien vingt francs pour le faire guerir.*”

Mr. Croft instantly undertook to cure



the dog without the fee, and volunteered to bleed him. The offer was instantly accepted. We were invited to the keeper's cottage, which was close at hand: the operation was quickly performed, and a prescription given for the benefit of the suffering animal. We were not allowed to depart without drinking some sour cider, and giving a promise of returning the following day to see the patient.

On taking leave, Mr. Croft presented the *garde de chasse* with a couple of two-franc pieces, telling him that they were intended as a plaister for each eye, which would make him blind for the season, in the event of our venturing on the property of the Marquis de ———, his master, on any future occasion. The ready-witted keeper smiled applause, and added, “*Avec un pareil emplâtre sur la bouche, on m’empêcherait de parler aussi.*”

The additional bribe was freely given to stop his mouth as well as obscure his vision, and we had no reason to complain of the timely liberality, for we uninterruptedly enjoyed excellent sport on the Marquis's *terres*, and were always hospitably received by the conscientious *garde*, who would never accept of any remuneration for his cider and brown bread, the answer being invariably, "*Vous avez guéri mon chien.*"

This man's love for his dog was no vain boasting, for his gratitude knew no bounds when his favourite was on his legs again ; his humble fare was always at our service whenever we visited his cottage, and he gave proof, by unremitting attention and civility, that he was not unmindful of the benefit conferred upon him by Mr. Croft's skill in canine diseases.

My kind friend will doubtless remem-

ber the circumstance, and I hope to talk the adventure over with him, before Christmas, by his fire-side, and with a bottle of his old bees'-wing between us, at Greenham.

It will be seen that the continental gamekeepers worship mammon as well as the fraternity in our own island, and I never yet knew one of these trusty guardians of game who was not to be overcome by persuasion and—a bribe.

The *gardes de chasse* on all the estates in the neighbourhood of Quimper were assiduous in their attentions, and did all in their power to further our sport. We learnt that the two little rivers which meet close to Quimper were well supplied with trout in the season. These streams are named l'Odet and Benaudet; and as the spring advanced, Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself walked some few miles to reconnoitre them.

In one of our rambles, we approached a French gentleman's chateau near Rospordon, who sent one of his servants to request we would honour him by partaking of some refreshment under his roof. We instantly complied with the mandate, and were most kindly received by the proprietor, Monsieur de G——. He was very proud of his campagne, and shewed us round his grounds, and pointed out some improvements he was about to make.

Having learnt that Captain P—— was an old dragoon, we were conducted to the stables, where the stud were paraded for our inspection. One of the horses which was led out had been purchased a few days before, and he was certainly a very likely-looking animal; he had but one fault, rather an unpleasant one certainly—*nobody could ride him*; and but half an hour before our unexpected ap-

pearance at the chateau, Monsieur de G—— had determined upon sending the restive brute down to the village Vulcan, who, in addition to his vocation of blacksmith, was what is termed in Brittany a *sorcier*, and who possessed a kind of charm in the way of *whispering* to horses.

This gift has been attributed to the Irish as well as the French, but I believe the faculty is not confined to Ireland and France, but is common in various forms to many other countries. Every one has heard of the Laplander's habit of whispering in the ears of his reindeer; and in various parts of Brittany several of these whisperers are to be met with, whose success is invariable and infallible.

I can here speak from experience, and had an opportunity of seeing the skill of the *sorcier* put to the proof. Captain P——, after an hour's fruitless endea-

vous to conquer the vicious spirit of the animal, resigned him to Monsieur de G—— and his groom. “*Il n’y a pas de remède,*” exclaimed the master; “*il faut l’amener chez le sorcier.*” Upon our expressing a wish to see the miracle wrought, Monsieur de G—— politely offered to accompany us to the village, in order that we might be convinced of the *sorcier’s* power. The *garçon d’écurie* led the refractory animal, and we followed on foot, determined to witness the extraordinary exhibition.

On arriving at the village, Monsieur de G—— ordered the groom to stop, when, to our astonishment, he mounted the horse, which was still saddled, and said to us, “*Vous verrez.*” The animal allowed his master to fix himself firmly in the saddle, but the moment Monsieur de G—— attempted to urge him forward, every muscle of the horse’s frame appeared to

be agitated with rage ; he reared, kicked, and plunged ; in short, left no means untried to shake his rider from his back.

Monsieur de G——, who was an excellent horseman, kept his seat, but he soon found that his situation was none of the pleasantest, and attempted to dismount ; but this the restive brute would not allow, for he reared more tremendously than before, and evinced a strong disposition to throw himself over his *cavalier*.

Just at this moment, a short, thick-set little man, attracted by the noise, came forth from a blacksmith's shop, towards which we had been directing our steps, and approaching the spot, acted the part of spectator for a few seconds, merely exclaiming “ *Le coquin.*”

At length the groom, impatient at his apparent apathy, cried out, “ *Mais soufflez donc, François, il va tomber, je te dis.*”

“Does *Monsieur* wish it?” demanded the *sorcier*, for such he was.

“*Nom de Dieu !*” said the groom, “*s’il le veut.*”

As soon as he had pronounced these words, the *sorcier* watched his opportunity, and threw his arms round the horse’s neck, who, not accustomed to such embraces, reared more violently than before, raising the little man off the ground with him ; but he kept his hold, not at all embarrassed, and contrived even in that awkward situation, to fix his mouth on the orifice of the animal’s ear.

What he did, or what he said, I know not. It is impossible to imagine that the mere breathing in the animal’s ear could have any effect, but his hands were occupied in holding tightly round the neck of the horse, and the only thing I could observe, was the firm pressure of the mouth on the ear. Be this as it may,



in a moment the horse became less restive, stood still, shivered a little as from cold, and from that moment *his spirit was gone*.

Strange as this must appear, it is a fact ; but how, and by what means, the miracle was wrought, must be left for wiser heads than mine to determine. It is, nevertheless, unquestionably true, that the horse became perfectly docile. I rode him frequently after he had passed through the enchanter's hands, and a more tractable quadruped I never wish to bestride.

After this adventure with the *sorcier*, we frequently drove over to Monsieur de G——'s chateau, as we had *carte blanche* to beat up his quarters whenever we felt so inclined ; his *cuisine* and his *cave* were worth visiting ; and this hospitable mansion being in the neighbourhood of the

trout streams, did not detract from the enjoyment we expected to derive from our excursions.

All the smaller rivers and streams in France are full of trout, and they have been fished by expert and experienced anglers, but I never yet met with a brother of the rod who could tell me he had caught a salmon.

It is somewhat extraordinary that none should have been found in the rivers near the sea-coast, and which discharge themselves into the ocean. There must be salmon in the Seine, the Somme, the Loire, the Gironde, and the Rhone, but who ever caught any with the fly? I once *hooked* a young one in the commune at Arques, when Captain L—— was with me, in the year 1830, but he (the salmon) carried away my foot-length, and such a fish being in the water was deemed a

marvellous occurrence. It must have run up from the harbour through the locks ; and I believe I may claim the honour of being the first fly-fisher who has ever *hooked* a salmon in the Arques, or any other river in France.

## CHAPTER X.

Salmon-fishing in Canada—Major Browne—Rods, lines, and flies—Visit to Jacques Cartier—Catching fish—Dancing at the toll-house—The Major's skill as a musician—Spearing salmon by torch-light.

GENTLE reader, are you a salmon-fisher? If you be, go to Canada; it is worth crossing the banks of Newfoundland to wet your line in a North American stream; they one and all are full of salmon and trout, which will be found to take, with a voracity so gratifying to the

zealous angler, flies of all denominations and colours. They are the veriest gluttons that ever rose to insect; not the finny epicure we meet with in our stinted rivers, which will lie furtively under a bank, or in the eddy pool, and laugh in his scales at your futile imitation of his living fare, but the downright gormandizer of real and mock flies, and who will rise at all and every description your book may contain.

He who has once sailed up the noble waters of the St. Laurence on his voyage to Quebec, can never forget the impression he must have received upon first entering that magnificent river. From the Island of Anticosti to the Island of Orleans, just below the city (a distance of nearly four hundred miles), the scenery is transcendantly beautiful.

The south shore presents one of the most pleasing pictures the eye ever dwelt

upon ; it is well wooded, and its banks are adorned with numerous villages and cottages, all neatly white-washed, presenting a *coup d'œil* impossible to describe.

The river, as you approach the capital of Lower Canada, is dotted with islets, and gives but little promise of the splendid scene that awaits the traveller on nearing the city of Quebec ; for no language can convey the remotest idea of the grandeur of the scene on rounding the point of land which conceals this beautiful city until the vessel enters the basin. The view is magnificent in the extreme, and bursts upon the astonished gazer as if by enchantment.

The Upper Town of Quebec overhangs the Lower, at an eminence of two hundred feet, and presents a most imposing appearance. The roofs of the cathedral, catholic churches, convents, and several

of the larger public buildings, are covered with tin, and from the somewhat remarkable circumstance of rust being unknown in that country, the appearance of the city, when seen from the river, is gorgeous in the extreme.

It was my good fortune to be the bearer of several flattering introductions to many officers of high rank, but none afforded me such true and lasting gratification as the opportunity granted me of becoming acquainted with my kind and excellent friend, Major Browne, of the 103rd Regiment. A better sportsman, *dans toute la force du terme*, never handled a gun or rod; he was, without exception, the very best snipe shot I ever saw; his execution was terrific; and as a fisherman—ye gods!—old Izaak Walton was a botcher in comparison. The accuracy, precision, and lightness of hand with which he would cast a fly over a salmon was worth crossing the Atlantic to look at.

A similarity in tastes and pursuits begets a ready interchange of ideas, and an hour's conversation will often lay the foundation of a lasting intimacy, when kindred spirits are thrown together. Such was the case in this instance, and I look back with proud satisfaction to the day when I was so fortunate as to attract the notice and distinction of my talented patron.

I was invited to breakfast with the Major two or three days after my arrival, and, as a mark of especial favour, was permitted to examine his treasures. A finer collection of flies and tackle of every description never greeted the eager gaze of the lover of angling; and as for the rods which decorated his *sanctum sanctorum*, they were beyond all price.

The Major entertained a thorough contempt for all rods, lines, foot-lengths, and flies, purchased at any fishing-tackle warehouse, observing, that, although very



pretty to look at, they were more adapted for show than use, especially in such rivers as we were likely to meet with. The force of his reasoning was made manifest within a week of the time, as the sequel will shew.

A party had been formed, some days previously to my arrival, to “pic-nic” on the banks of the river Jacques Cartier, the most prolific of all the rivers within a reasonable distance of the garrison of Quebec. It is a broad, bubbling, impetuous, rushing stream, tributary to that queen of waters, the St. Laurence; it runs into this magnificent river some six and thirty miles above the capital of the Lower Province. This was to be the first piscatorial excursion of the season, and great was the sport we anticipated.

I was consigned to the care of the Major, and towards the latter end of June, in the year 1816, we left Quebec, soon

after daylight, for the appointed scene of action. A more joyous party never were congregated together ; we were six in number — Major Browne and Captain Griffiths, of the 103rd Regiment ; Mr. Downes, a cornet of the 19th Light Dragoons ; Captain Pearce, of the 60th Regiment ; Mr. Hamilton, a West India merchant ; and myself. Two domestics, with a canteen and a bountiful supply of provender, brought up the rear, in an American waggon ; and any casual observer might justly have imagined, by the number of rods that protruded from the three dog-carts which preceded the more humble vehicle, that not a salmon would be left in the river to return to the ocean at the end of the season.

After a delightful drive of eighteen miles, we stopped to break our fast at the half-way house ; and having given our horses sufficient rest, we proceeded on our road,

and about two o'clock arrived at our journey's end.

To those unacquainted with the stupendous scenery of the Canadas, it is impossible to furnish an adequate description of this wild and romantic spot. Do me the kindness, then, gentle reader, to picture to yourself a rushing, boiling stream of dark water, flowing over an inclined bed of rocky substance, broken by occasional obstructions, hemmed in by high banks of granite, shaded by a forest of pine trees, with here and there a slight fall or cascade, eddies and whirlpools, and you will form some slight idea of the Jacques Cartier river.

The roaring of the water is heard for some time before you approach the village which bears the same name as the river (christened, it is said, after a Frenchman, who discovered it.) It is romantically situated on both sides of the high and rocky banks.

A long, steep, and sandy road winds down to the river, over which a beautiful and curiously-formed bridge connects the straggling cottages, or, I should say, rather, forms a communication for the inhabitants. On the opposite side is the toll-house and residence of the person who rents the bridge from the government.

The occupant, at the time I write of, was a comely widow, who, with some of her relatives, was on the look-out for us ; we were most cordially welcomed by the fair hostess, especially the major, who evidently stood high in her good graces. Here were our head-quarters, and most comfortably were we housed.

Before our commanding-officer would permit us to put our rods together, he paraded us on the bridge, and directing our attention to several deep pools formed under some projecting and shelving rocks, we beheld hundreds upon hundreds of

fine salmon, literally in layers ; some of the fish would rise occasionally at any living insect as it floated down the river, but, to our inexpressible mortification, quite out of the reach of any of our lines. The fish were evidently making their way up the stream ; and above the bridge, at a small fall, some were to be seen taking their leaps in endeavouring to force their passage.

The fishermen of the village, who rent several miles of this prolific river, had placed conical nets at each of these cascades to intercept the course of the salmon ; many were caught in this manner during our stay, and placed in reservoirs hewn out of the granite on the banks, and there kept until forwarded to the market at Quebec.

Our guide and master, the major, allowed us to prepare for action, after he had shewn us the wonders of his favourite

stream, and we set to, with no little eagerness, to make our preparations for accompanying him to the stands lower down the river.

I think I see my warm-hearted friend leering at us with a half-suppressed smile and an occasional chuckle, as we displayed, one by one, our boasted London rods and tackle ; it appeared to me at the time to savour somewhat of malice, or perhaps envy, at the superiority of our equipment, as I unsuspectingly imagined ; and this opinion was strengthened on seeing an unwieldy mis-shapen pole, as I thought (but which he dignified by the appellation of rod), spliced together by himself. This apparently unsightly tool was composed of only two joints, and made to splice in the centre. The lower half was of pitch pine, and the upper joint of hickory, with, of course, the whale-bone top.

His line, *mirabile dictu*, was of *whip-cord*, which had undergone a six months' immersion in linseed oil. Its original fabric was, by this operation, in nowise discernible; it wore the appearance of a supple weed, perfectly round and smooth, and, when cast by the major's masterly hand, fell as light as a single gut on the water.

His foot-length was proportionally strong at the junction with the line, being composed of three of the stoutest pieces of round clear gut, twisted by himself with his own wheel or "jenny." The whole foot-length was made of treble gut, but tapering down to the hook, which was accomplished by selecting lengths, diminishing in texture at each knot.

In fishing in Canada there is one precaution necessary, and which I had not dreamt of, and that is to guard against the merciless and blood-thirsty attacks of

the musquitoes and a little damnable black fly. These infernal enemies to repose and comfort assail in myriads, with their probosces, the unprepared stranger. The major, like an old soldier, had provided an antidote, and before starting, I was anointed, as well as my brother fishermen, with a mixture of oil of turpentine and hog's-lard, over the face and hands, the ears and neck having been previously protected by a silk handkerchief tied over the head and fastened behind.

Away we sallied, rod in hand, and about a quarter of a mile below the bridge we came to a large sheet of smooth water at the foot of a short rapid. I was absolutely riveted to the spot for a time; a more enchanting scene I never beheld. I could have fancied myself hundreds of miles from the haunts of man; the wildness of the surrounding landscape, the distant murmuring and subdued roar of



the water, and the comparatively placid stream before me, gave rise to sensations I shall not easily forget.

This beautiful sheet of water the major had named the *hospital*, from the circumstance of the salmon reposing in this still pool, after the fatigue of ascending the river. Here the fish recruited their strength to enable them to proceed up the numerous cascades with which the water abounds.

Here our first trial of skill commenced ; our gallant leader was the first in the field, and at the second cast hooked a fine fish. The salmon, after divers leaps and struggles to disengage himself, took our master in tow and went down the stream at a racing pace, which kept the major at a brisk trot for a considerable distance. Our commander-in-chief was not to be shaken off, and, fearing his prey might give him some trouble if allowed

to reach a fall some distance lower down, gave the fish two or three checks, and landed the king of the rivers in about a quarter of an hour, much to our gratification. The salmon weighed upwards of fourteen pounds, and was in prime season.

The major had scarcely landed his prize ere we heard a shout from two or three of our companions, and on directing our eyes to the spot from whence the sounds proceeded we discovered that the dragoon had hooked another ; but before our master had arrived to give the cornet the benefit of a few hints as to the management of his captive, the joints of his patent rod had increased considerably in number, and the splinters were lying at his feet ; while the salmon, as if in derision at the disaster, went skipping off, wagging his tail most intelligibly, as much as to say “ Catch me if you can.” Poor Downes, to use his own expression,

was *exceedingly disgusted* at the occurrence, and betook himself to trout-fishing, in which, it is but fair to add, he succeeded passing well.

It was my lot to hook the next fish, but lost him, to my infinite discomfiture, together with my foot-length, and some two or three yards of line. We were all doomed to a similar disappointment, barring always the major, who killed five fish, Mr. Hamilton two, and myself one, at the close of the evening.

Our want of success I must attribute, independently of our inferiority to the major in point of skill, to the circumstance of our lines being too bright for the water. I have before stated, that the river was of a dark colour: this arises I should conceive from the substratum being mixed with ferruginous ore. The major, with his habitual observation and forethought, had remedied this objection

by steeping his foot-lengths in cocoa, which had the effect of dyeing them of the precise colour of the stream.

His flies were of a very peculiar construction, and, with a national partiality truly pardonable, considering their excellence, they were invariably made on the Limerick hook. The fly he generally used was the following : the extremity of the body purple, the centre a reddish brown, and the head a bright yellow ; for the tail two narrow strips of the mallard's feather, and the wings from the pinion of a pheasant ; this was one of the major's favourites, and a killing fly it was ; but he had others, and in endless variety. He had one *par excellence* (his *Sunday fly*, as he called it) yclept " Miss Jenny," that never failed him, as he repeatedly assured me. It was of a bright red colour in the body, and when held up to the light had a brilliant and captivating

appearance; and were I a salmon I should inevitably rise at it. The major, however, would never reveal the nature of the material of which it was composed.

The Jacques Cartier river is full of fish; and had I but a yacht I would sail for the St. Laurence every year, were it only for the extraordinary sport to be met with in its tributary streams. A European can form no idea of the numbers of salmon that are to be met with, and in point of flavour they are equal to any I ever tasted, not excepting those taken from the Severn.

The fish in the Jacques Cartier river do not run very large; the biggest I ever caught did not weigh fifteen pounds. I once had half my line carried away, and my rod (a London one) shivered to splinters by an enormous fish, I should say nearly double that weight. It is true I have seen some immense salmon in the pools and eddies under the overhanging rocks

which I have already spoken of, but they were out of reach, and doubtless too wary to be enticed by dubbing and feather.

The major, in addition to his other acquirements, was no mean proficient on the violin, and in the evening the youth of both sexes from the village were to be seen winding down the tortuous path which led to the toll-house on the bridge. The widow's kitchen was often the scene of innocent mirth during the major's visits to Jacques Cartier ; nor did he ever appear more in his element than when seated on a rude table in a corner of the room, and sending forth seraphic sounds from his pet cremona. His music breathed of the Emerald Isle ; and the Canadian belles of the neighbourhood have never forgotten the inspiriting effect of " Paddy O'Rafferty," " Huisht the Cat," and another of his favourite Irish " Planxtys."



*Engraved by Henry Colburn, Great Marlborough Street*

DANCING TO THE MAJOR'S FIDDLE IN THE KITCHEN OF THE TOLL HOUSE.





A bowl of stiff rum punch usually wound up the entertainment, and the only reward exacted by the benevolent major for his fiddling was a kiss from the female votaries of Terpsichore—an offering more relished by our military Paganini than the widow, who viewed with a jealous eye any infringement upon her prerogative.

We contrived to pass our time very pleasantly while under the major's banner, whenever we repeated our visits to this beautiful spot. Some anti-Waltonians, envious of our happiness, were base enough to spread certain evil reports as affecting our morality, and even went so far as to hint at the *cure's* baptismal duties being on the increase; but I can assure my readers it was a groundless calumny.

To all those who may possess a fishing-box near a salmon river, I beg to recommend to their notice the following method

of dressing their fish for breakfast :—As soon as the salmon is caught, crimp it— if hooked in the morning, so much the better—carry it home and cut it in slices ; broil them, and when done, break some boiled eggs (not too hard) over them, with a sprinkling of salt and a plentiful dusting of Cayenne. The fish thus dressed, and eaten with some rice, boiled after the Indian manner, perfectly dry, is one of the best ornaments on a breakfast-table, and is a salacious condiment much to be coveted.

Fried fish and rice constitute one of the many luxuries enjoyed in the East Indies. In the Western hemisphere I know of but two. One is, sitting up to your chin in a cold bath ; and the other d——g Christopher Columbus for having discovered the islands at all.

The most singular meal of salmon I ever partook of was on a fishing visit to

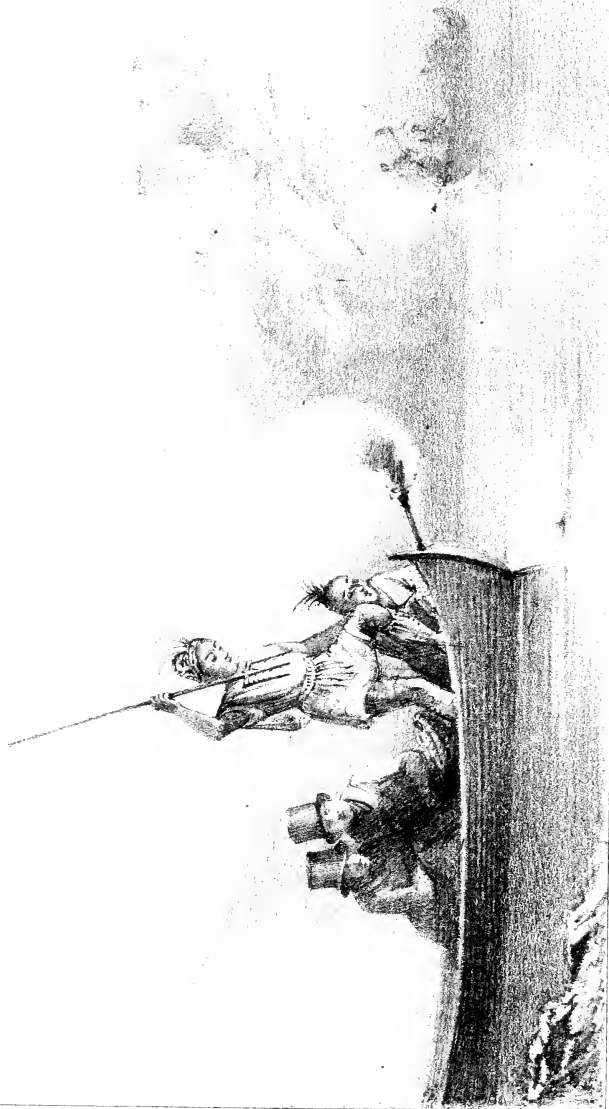
Jacques Cartier, about two years subsequently to the meeting I have recorded. During one of my excursions with the major to our favourite *rendezvous*, we were waited upon by some straggling Indians, who invited us to join them some twenty miles up the river, where they promised us good sport in spearing the salmon. We readily agreed to accompany them, and set off on foot the same day with our savage friends.

We arrived about dusk at a little encampment of wigwams they had established, and after having refreshed ourselves with a comfortable repast and a few hours' sleep, we embarked at midnight in a canoe, and were highly gratified at the surpassing dexterity of our sable companions, as well as surprised at the wonderful quickness of sight with which they were endowed.

Two enormous pitch pine torches were

placed in the bow of the canoe, which attracted the salmon to the light. As the fish approached the glare on the surface of the water, the Indians called to us and pointed to the spot where they were, but we could not perceive any object, excepting on two occasions ; and it frequently happened, as we were straining our eyeballs in our endeavours to discover a fish, a splash would announce that a spear had penetrated a salmon, and in a trice it was to be seen quivering in the boat.

On returning after our nocturnal excursion, we found a blazing fire and red-hot embers at the door, or rather entrance, of the wigwam appropriated to our use. A salmon of nearly twenty pounds, having been previously gutted and cleaned, was swaddled in some leaves and placed over the embers on a kind of spit, to which it was attached, and roasted with the scales on. These and the skin were peeled off



SPEARING SALMON, BY TORCH LIGHT ON THE JACQUES CARTIER RIVER.

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when the culinary process was finished, and the milky flakes which broke on the fish being distributed to the guests, were the most appetizing and alluring *morceaux* I ever discussed.

Whether our appetites were keener than usual, I will not pretend to say, but I never remember having eaten salmon in such perfection ; and my old friend Dr. Kitchener himself must have acknowledged that even his own zest was not required to heighten the flavour of our roasted dainty.

## CHAPTER XI.

Trout-fishing at Quimper—Remarks upon tackle, flies, and rods—Bowness, Chevalier, and Ulstonson—Flies described—A list given—Recall of the author to England—Remarks on the hospitality and kindness of French country gentlemen—Hints to English sportsmen on the Continent—Conclusion.

I MUST now take leave to hop across the Atlantic and return to Quimper, where, in the month of April, Captain P——, Mr. W——, and myself, were making earnest preparations for whipping the trout-streams.

Our tackle was first-rate, and we had



abundance of material for manufacturing such flies as we thought best suited to the water. This in some measure was a matter of some doubt ; for I have known the trout to vary in his taste in different streams, and a fly that will be taken with avidity in one river, would not command a rise in another.

In fishing a river with which the angler has no previous acquaintance, the best plan is to try the eddies at the *corners* of the streams, and where the circular movement of the current throws out a frequent sustenance for the finny inhabitants. In these spots the large trout will be found, and the experience of every angler will have told him that an excellent capture is repeatedly made from some small spot behind, or by the side of, a particular stone, where from day to day one well-sized fish seems to succeed another in the favourite feeding ground.

In this knowledge of peculiar localities consists the chief advantage of a previous acquaintance with the water. The smaller fish are found in most abundance in the widely-spread and shallow streams, as well as in the extended parts of pools of no great depth.

As a general rule, the angler may be advised to fish with the wind in his back and the sun in front, which not only gives him a great command of his line, but prevents himself or his shadow from being so distinctly perceived. A strict adherence to this plan, however, is by no means advisable, as the angler's position in relation to sun and wind must frequently vary with the natural course of the river.

I will now endeavour to give a list of the flies which are most useful in the French rivers. I have generally found the *red hackle*, *black gnat*, and *dun flies*, very taking on the other side of the Chan-

nel. I found also a fly of my own making to be exceedingly killing—a *reddish brown body*, with the wings from the pinion of the fieldfare, and a single strip of mallard wing for tail. I did great execution with this in the neighbourhood of Dieppe.

The very early flies—those that come in during the month of April—are hardly worth the pains bestowed on the imitation. I allude more particularly to the beetle-winged flies,—such as the *soldier fly* and the *tab fly*. Of the tribe of beetle-winged flies, the *fern web*, or *hazel fly*, is the best: they will be found in May and part of June upon the ferns and hazle bushes.

Of the ephemeral flies, which come in during the month of May, the following are adapted for *very fine* water, which is often the case in Brittany:—1st, the *little brown dun*, or *spinner*; 2nd, the *little yellow May fly*; and 3rd, the *yel-*

*low Sally*. The *oak fly* is an excellent one for the month of May, and so is the *stone fly*; indeed, I almost prefer it to the green drake, though it be not quite so fashionable.

The stone fly is very difficult to copy. The neatest and best fly-maker I know, or ever heard of, is Miss Bowness, of Bell-yard, Fleet-street, whose family have manufactured fishing-tackle for centuries. I can conscientiously recommend the trout and salmon fisher to this establishment; for every article appertaining to an angler's equipment will be found of the best quality, and turned out in a workmanlike manner, and for neatness and finish this firm excel all competitors in the trade.

The flies made by the taper fingers of Miss Bowness are *bijoux*, and are executed with a truth and fidelity perfectly startling. She is, in truth, the greatest enemy the salmon and trout ever had, for her

imitations are so true to nature that these fish have no chance.

I do in all sincerity recommend Miss Bowness to be careful, should she ever venture upon picking a trout or salmon peel, for if some day or other the bone of some spiteful fish do no choke her, I am no true prophet. There is a world of mischief in her fingers.

Mr. Bowness, who is a most intelligent person, will give the angler every information as to the best flies; and any recommendation from him can be strictly relied on. Those I have named will be found very killing—the *green*, *grey*, and *black drake*, will be found very useful, as well as the *Palmer*.

Trout are, in some respects, like the fair sex. I do not mean as to tickling; but they are capricious, and will refuse a fly that five minutes previously they have risen at and taken voraciously.

It is better on these occasions to give them a little respite, by taking a nap on the bank. In an hour try them again, and change your fly until you have hit their fancy. If they continue in the fastidious mood, and you see them rising at the natural fly, catch one of these and tie one as like it as possible on the spot. I mention this, as no true fisherman should be without his book, dubbing, and apparatus at the river side.

Dubbing, or what is sold as such, is to be had in abundance in London, but it lacketh the lustre which is so essential to the expert angler. The stuff sold at the generality of the shops is a compound of coloured worsteds and wool, which, independently of the want of sparkling brilliancy when held to the light, soak up the water, and consequently have not that buoyancy on the ripple of the stream which with me is a *sine quâ non*.

To judge accurately as to the merits of an artificial fly, hold it up between yourself and a strong light, and if it have not that shining, I had almost said transparent gloss, which the natural insect possesses, lay it down, for it will be found next to useless in any river or stream. The pig's down, when dyed, possesses this virtue, and none but real amateurs, or rather connoisseurs, have it; it is extremely difficult to be procured genuine, and it is expensive into the bargain.

The colours which will be found most useful in France are, *brown, light and dark, purple, yellow, light and dark, and grey.* *Hackles* of all colours are requisite also. It is to be presumed the sportsman will never be without materials for his wings—such as the pheasant, partridge, fieldfare, and thrush, as well as mallard wings for tailing.

The operation of fly-making amounts

nearly to an art, and great nicety and precision are required ; it is by no means an unfitting employment for the softer sex ; indeed, I could name one or two of my fair friends who excel in this particular.

An old brother of the angle, Mr. A——, who lives not a hundred miles from Cheltenham, has a daughter who makes all her papa's flies, to say nothing of kill-devils, spinning-jennies, and other murderous trout-slayers ; and if the fish in the streams around Frogmill could speak, they would a mournful tale unfold as to the disappearance of their companions, by reason of this amiable young lady's skill.

I have already said that my companions and myself were well provided with tackle. Our rods were excellent ; but all by different makers. Captain P——'s was by Ulstonson, Mr. W——'s by Chevalier, and my own by Mr. Bowness ;



and, strange enough, all three manufactured within a hundred yards of each other—in Bell-yard, Fleet-street. Of the three, I certainly preferred my own, although the others were as near perfection as possible ; but much depends upon fancy as well as use. However, the three makers are so well known, and their superiority so universally acknowledged, that it would be difficult to award the palm to any one in particular ; but for choice give me Bowness. There is, generally speaking, more elasticity and equality of play in his rods than any others I ever met with ; and I have witnessed fewer accidents, in the way of breakage, with his articles than those by any other maker. I have fished with his rods for years, and am bound, in justice, to testify to his merit as a maker of fly-rods.

We commenced operations towards the end of April, and met with tolerable suc-

cess ; and every day, as the season advanced, our sport increased. By the middle of May we had nothing to wish for : the trout were in abundance, and fed like aldermen ; they did not run very large, seldom exceeding a pound in weight, but they rose freely, and we were always sure of a full basket.

In the plenitude of my enjoyment, and with the hope, if not the certainty, of being enabled to pass some months if not years in Brittany, my prospective happiness was cut short by a communication from Lincoln's-inn. This unwelcome missive imperatively called for my presence at home, and that with as little delay as possible ; and, to ensure obedience on my part, a gentle hint was conveyed to me that the *supplies* would be withheld until ocular proof was afforded the gentlemen of the long robe that I was within a visiting distance of their chambers.

My adventures in Brittany must therefore be considered as at an end ; but before I complete my task I will take the liberty of making a few observations on the facilities that are afforded to the English sportsman in France, in the hope that some few knights of the trigger will follow my example and run over the same ground as myself.

To begin then where I left off. Quimper is the town I would recommend for a *fixed* residence ; it combines every desideratum,—cheapness of living, excellent society, and shooting and fishing in perfection. The inhabitants are friendly and hospitable to a degree, and will vie with each other in promoting the views and comforts of any Englishman who may be the bearer of letters of introduction.

House-rent is extremely low, and provisions incredibly cheap. Our wines we laid in from Bordeaux direct, as Captain

P—— was acquainted with one of the principals in Mr. Johnson's house, and we were supplied with genuine claret; our best wine did not stand us in a franc a bottle, and the *vin ordinaire* at less than half that sum.

A married couple of prudent habits could live most respectably and comfortably on a hundred a-year; a bachelor for much less.

The sportsman, in pursuing his favourite pastime, will oftentimes find himself in the neighbourhood of a French gentleman's country seat. Let him but pay the compliment of calling at his door and ask permission to shoot; this will invariably be frankly and cordially given, and in all probability such a trifling act of common courtesy will lay the foundation of a pleasant acquaintance, if not a lasting intimacy. I have uniformly found this to be the case, and I rejoice in the oppor-

tunity afforded me of recording the never-failing urbanity and kindness of the French landed proprietors. I owe them all a heavy debt of gratitude, for I have experienced such civility and attention from them that I could never have expected, and which I might have looked for in vain in my own country.

I here tender them my heartfelt thanks, as well as to the warm-hearted hospitable inhabitants of Quimper, Rennes, and Guingamp.

My countrymen in general are unsociable animals ; and this feeling, coupled with a certain degree of shyness and a national reserve, conveys an impression on the minds of the French people that an Englishman is too proud to mix familiarly with them and partake of their amusements. To the absence of all these freezing peculiarities in my disposition and habits, I believe I am indebted for the

cordial reception I experienced from one end of France to the other.

The true citizen of the world is the man who conforms to the customs and manners of every nation. I became a Frenchman myself in France, not upon this principle alone, but from inclination also ; and if in the course of human events a pittance should be awarded me, to France will I go, and in Brittany will I pitch my tent.

Guimgamp, L'Orient, and Quimper are marvellously cheap towns, but the latter for choice. Should the distance deter the sportsman who may wish to indulge in a month's ramble, let him try Dieppe for trout-fishing, and Abbeville for snipe and wild fowl-shooting ; he will find very good bird-shooting, also, in the month of September. There is unexceptionable English society at Abbeville as well as St. Omer ; and some one or two families I could name would make any place a Paradise.

Some years will elapse before Frenchmen will become good field shots and general sportsmen ; their taste for racing is decidedly on the rise, and they are enthusiastic admirers of that break-neck pastime steeple-chasing ; but, generally speaking, they are not fond of manly out-of-door amusements. The game of cricket, for instance, is a perfect riddle to them.

We got up a tolerably good match behind the Hotel Royal, on the beach, at Dieppe, for the amusement of the Duchesse de Berri, in the year 1829. We mustered, with some difficulty, two elevens ; the bowlers pitched their balls with scientific precision ; the batters defended their wickets with great skill ; short and long stops were on the alert ; in fact, all the performers acquitted themselves most admirably.

As soon as the first innings were over, one of the party, who had been most active

in the display of his athletic powers, approached the Duchess's carriage in the expectation of being complimented on his exertions; instead of which, one of the suite asked the gentleman, to his utter dismay and confusion, when this game of *creekey* was going to begin!

The sportsman who may wish to undertake a pedestrian tour through France will never meet with the slightest check or hindrance; his passport and *porte d'armes* in his pocket, he may wander where he listeth. At every farm-house,—ay, in every cabin or hut,—he will experience a frank and hearty welcome; the produce of his gun will be cheerfully dressed by the *bonne femme* of the dwelling; and, lacking these, an old farm-yard cock or hen will be sacrificed on the altar of hospitality, and in an inconceivably short space of time a savoury stew or soup will smoke on the homely board.



If night overtake the wanderer, he is sure of finding a good bed under the poorest peasant's roof; the commonest labourer has this solace after his daily toil; for, even amongst an all but starving population, I have ever found good mattresses and clean homespun linen sheets.

The inland *departements* are well stocked with game of all kinds. On the Dijon road, about ten miles from Montargis, there are some splendid preserves. Some friends of mine were on a visit to Mr. Kalkbrenner, the celebrated pianiste, about eighteen years ago, at his beautiful seat Praslin, near Nogent sur Vernisson, and had most extraordinary sport on his estate; they described the quantity of game as being perfectly incredible. This property has been sold, I believe, since the death of Madame Kalkbrenner; whoever purchased it has as good shooting at his

command as the Lord of Holkham can boast of.

The senseless cry of war which has been raised by a rabid faction will not, I fervently hope, lead to any unpleasant result,—such as a distrustful feeling between the two nations. The amicable footing upon which the English and French have lived for a quarter of a century is, I hope, too firmly established to be weakened by the mischievous designs of a discontented, revolutionary party.

All honourably-minded and well-disposed persons are for maintaining the friendly intercourse which has subsisted so long. With the present enlightened and newly formed French ministry we have the certainty of peace and good will.

His most gracious Majesty Louis Philippe has set a glorious example to his excitable subjects, and may his wisdom and firmness produce the desired end ! In

closing these remarks, I cannot do better than quote the words of one of our most popular writers\* (for they are singularly applicable at this moment), who says—

“ France, with all thy faults, I love thee still ! No man should travel from his cradle to his grave without paying thee a visit by the way ; and with a disposition prone to enjoyment it lightens the journey amazingly. The French are a kind people, and it must be his fault who cannot live happily with them.

“ Pity it is, possessing as they do, whatever can contribute to the felicity of a people in a state of peace, that war should be indispensable in order to render their idea of happiness complete—*la gloire* and *la guerre* form the eternal burden of their song ; as if the chief business of life were to destroy life. They would fight to-

\* From “ Sketches and Recollections ” by John Poole, Esq.

morrow with any nation on earth for no better an object than the chance of obtaining a victory.

“ Laugh at me if you please for uttering what you may consider a foolish opinion, but I look upon it as a serious misfortune to them that the two words *gloire* and *victoire* rhyme together. They so constantly occur in that portion of their poetry which is the most popular, and the best calculated to excite them in a high degree—their *vaudeville* songs—that the two ideas they express have become identical in their minds ; and he will deserve well of his country who shall discover the means of making *glory* rhyme to *peace*.”

THE END.







